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Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Chamber hopeful other carriers will pick up the slack of Asiana

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Guerrero

The impending suspension of Asiana Airlines flights in November is expected to result in a large drop in tourist arrivals from South Korea, but the Saipan Chamber of Commerce is hopeful the remaining South Korean carriers will strive to pick up the slack so the loss isn't heavily felt.

According to Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Joe Guerrero, the CNMI business community, which relies heavily on tourism, hopes the remaining carriers will try to pick up the slack once Asiana temporarily suspend flights in November. Asiana intends to resume flights to the CNMI in December.

See CHAMBER on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Thirteen of the 18 recipients from the Northern Marianas College and the Northern Marianas Technical Institute pose for group photo after receiving the Fall 2023 Saipan Chamber of Commerce scholarship yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan in Garapan.

Emergency power procurement OK'd for Rota

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board of directors unanimously authorized the CUC management yesterday to do an emergency procurement for a minimum of two megawatts of temporary power on Rota, which reportedly has been experiencing power outages for a couple of weeks now.

Acting board chair Donald R. Browne presided over the emergency board meeting. Simon A. Sanchez made the motion for the emergency procurement after listening to the discussions by CUC acting executive director Betty G. Terlaje and CUC Power Generation manager Richard Cano.

The two other directors

See ROTA on Page 4

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board acting chair Donald R. Browne presides over an emergency meeting yesterday afternoon. The board unanimously approved for the CUC management to do an emergency procurement of temporary power generation on Rota.

SCC awards 18 scholarships to NMC and NMTI students

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce awarded scholarships yesterday to 18 students from the Northern Marianas College and the Northern Marianas Technical Institute in a presentation ceremony at the Hyatt Regency Saipan during the group's monthly assembly.

The scholarship recipients from NMC were Rabeya Akter, Richard Baleares, Christine Barrozo, Alieza Billedo, Ainah Chargualaf, Ardel Ciolo, Yi Huang, Arianna Kapileo, Ayesha Mustansar, Xinyi "Rain" Ni, Maxine

See STUDENTS on Page 4

Ad-hoc committee eyes resuming House probe of BOOST Program

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Yumul

After several months of silence, the House of Representatives' Special Committee on Federal Assistance & Disaster-related Funding will hold a meeting today, Thursday, in connection with their investigation into the previous administration's Building Optimism, Opportunity and Stability Together Program.

Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan), who chairs the special committee, told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that the meeting will be more procedural.

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Pacific Islands Club Saipan is excited to host the "2023 Happy Autumn Festival."
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NATION
Speaker Kevin McCarthy was voted out of the job Tuesday in an extraordinary showdown—a first in U.S. history.
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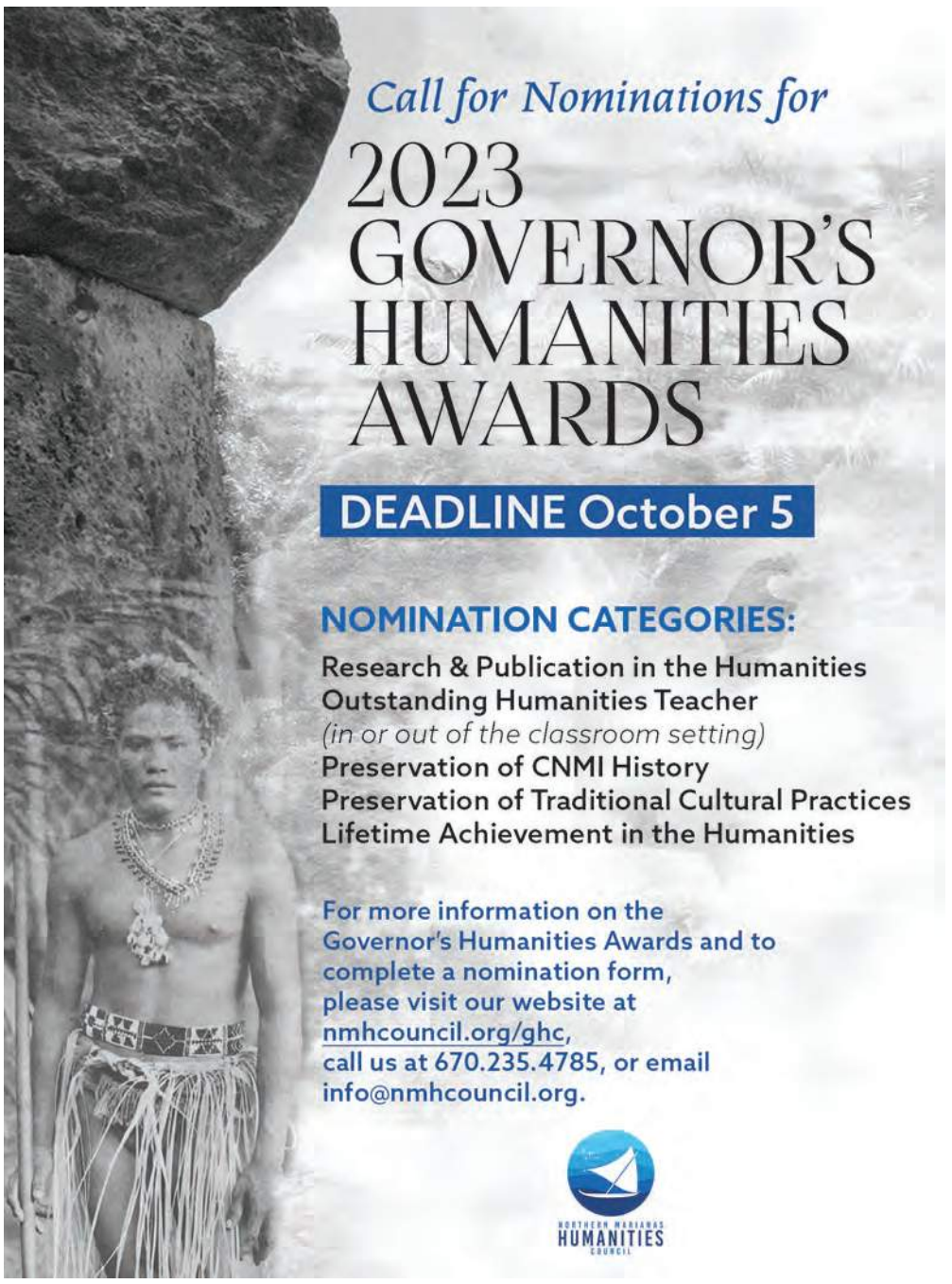
SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.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NORTHERN MARIANAS HUMANITIES COUNCIL

Local

Default judgment vs IPI OK'd

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has granted a default judgment in favor of Kan Pacific Saipan Ltd. in its breach of contract suit against Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC.

Magistrate Judge Heather Kennedy entered last Monday a default judgment in favor of Kan Pacific for IPI's failure to respond to the complaint.

"Kan Pacific filed the instant action against IPI asserting breach of contract. IPI was served a copy of the summons and complaint on Sept. 8, 2023. Pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure, IPI's response to the complaint was due on Sept. 29, 2023. On Sept. 30, Kan Pacific filed a motion for entry of default requesting [that the] clerk of court enter default against IPI. It appears from the record that IPI has failed to appear, plead, or otherwise defend [itself]. The default of IPI is hereby entered," states the court order.

According to court documents, Kan Pacific filed the breach of contract suit against IPI last month over the casino investor's continuous failure to make payments toward its contractual obligation with Kan Pacific.

The complaint stated that IPI still has an ongoing obligation to Kan Pacific pursuant to an agreement they had back in May 2016.

Although the court issued a judgment in Kan Pacific's first suit against IPI for its failure to make its June 2020, June 2021, and June 2022 payments amounting to over $400,000, IPI has again defaulted on its June 2023 payment.

In addition, IPI has yet to satisfy the court's judgment in Kan Pacific's initial breach of contract suit.

Pursuant to the agreement between Kan Pacific and IPI, the latter is contractually obligated to pay Kan Pacific $5,000,000, which was to be satisfied by making 25 annual payments in the amount of $200,000 on June 1 of each calendar year, commencing on June 1, 2017.

IPI made the first three annual payments that were due in June 2017, June 2018, and June 2019.

However, IPI failed and refused to pay the amount that that was due on June 1,2020, even after Kan Pacific sent IPI the 10-day notice of default.

Kan Pacific finally filed a civil action against IPI based upon IPI's failure to make the payments due on June 1. 2020, June 1, 2021, and June I, 2022.

The court issued a judgment in favor of Kan Pacific in December 2022 in the amount of $697,801.30 plus post-judgment interest under the federal rate of 4.76% per annum.

However, to date, the judgment remains unpaid.

Kan Pacific has also recently applied for a writ of execution against IPI's properties to satisfy the unpaid judgment, but IPI has since opposed the request.

IPI alleges that senior lien holders, like USA Fanter and Joshua Gray, should be given priority.

Supporting the fight against breast cancer

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Members of the Commonwealth Cancer Association, cancer survivors, and supporting agencies such as the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., Office of Women Affairs, and Marianas Medical Supply join Gov. Arnold I. Palacios as he and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang sign the Breast Cancer Awareness Month proclamation last Monday at the Office of the Governor on Capitol Hill

In a unified call for the CNMI community to join the fight against breast cancer, members of the Commonwealth Cancer Association joined Gov. Arnold I. Palacios as he and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang signed the Breast Cancer Awareness Month proclamation last Monday at the Office of the Governor on Capital Hill.

Besides the CCA, Palacios, and Apatang, the conference room was packed with cancer survivors, family members, fellow advocates in the forefront of the fight against cancer, as well as supporting agencies such as the Office of Women Affairs, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., and Marianas Medical Supply.

The proclamation highlighted statistics from the CNMI Data registry lists of 2020, which named breast cancer as the leading cancer among the Top 10 adult cancers in the CNMI.

A high 79% of breast cancers in the CNMI were diagnosed at Stage 3 or higher. Locally, there were 35 new breast cancer patients in 2022. For the year 2023, there are already 24 new breast cancer patients.

The proclamation called for action to reduce these numbers through regular breast cancer screening, constant self-examination among women as young as 20, and the most important form of testing, which is the mammogram, as it "can detect the cancer up to two years before the tumor can be felt by you or your doctor."

Healthy weight, an active lifestyle, a moderate to no alcohol consumption, and a focus on the things that bring contentment physically and emotionally are also highly encouraged.

"By educating ourselves and supporting each other, we will improve the quality of life of all in the CNMI affected by breast cancer and one day, defeat this terrible disease," the proclamation states.

It was also stated at the event that breast cancer is not a survivor's sole identity. Inspirational speaker Mercilia Teigita shared that her family has had a constant battle with cancer but "it will never define us, or hold us back from expressing and doing what we love, and also standing together in the time of need."

As the proclamation states, "We stand with our mothers, daughters, aunties, and friends. We recognize all those, who have joined their loved ones in fighting their battles, and honor all those who have lost their lives to breast cancer."

In his remarks, Apatang said that, as a cancer survivor himself, he understands the importance of regular examinations and checkups for early treatment and prevention.

Palacios said this fight is also a personal matter for him after he lost a close friend to cancer.

Palacios called for everyone in the community to join the fight against cancer and support the movement by learning and sharing more information on the matter. He also encourages all women to prioritize their health through self-examination. The public is encouraged to check out all the resources available at the CCA and CHCC.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M Apatang sign the Breast Cancer Awareness Month proclamation last Monday at the Office of the Governor on Capital Hill.

Zajradhara sues BOOST adjudicators over alleged misuse of ARPA funds

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Zaji Zajradhara, who is notorious for suing local companies and government entities, has filed another lawsuit, this time against BOOST grant adjudicators, and is seeking relief to the tune of $1 million. U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona soon dismissed his claims for failure to state a claim.

Zajradhara filed his first amended complaint in the U.S. District Court for the NMI last week, requesting for an injunction against former Finance secretary David Atalig, former Economic Development director Jose Taisague, and former gubernatorial chief of staff Will Castro, who all served as adjudicators for the previous administration's Building Optimism, Opportunity and Stability Together, grant program, which aimed to provide loan assistance to CNMI businesses and non-profit organizations.

In his latest suit, Zajradhara alleged unfair treatment and misuse of federal funds as he was not awarded a grant under the program.

Specifically, Zajradhara alleges that because he exercised his first amendment right when disclosing the CNMI's misuse of funds, Atalig "constructively denied" a review of his application for ARPA funds while disbursing those funds to his friends and family.

For these alleged claims, Zajradhara asked the court to grant him relief in the form of a monetary award of $1 million or the amount of funds he requested in his American Rescue Plan Act application.

In addition, Zajradhara asked that the court grant a preliminary injunction preventing the CNMI from further dispersing ARPA funds to ensure there are enough funds in the event that he prevails and is awarded an ARPA grant.

However, Manglona dismissed Zajradhara's claims without prejudice for failing to state a claim.

"If Zajradhara seeks to pursue his claims, he must file a second amended complaint no later than Oct. 31, 2023. Failure to do so may result in dismissal of this case. In his second amended complaint, plaintiff must also re-allege all facts regarding each named defendant if he seeks to establish any liability on them," she said.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the BOOST program was a project of the Office of the Governor and the Department of Commerce last year. After the program concluded late last year, the House of Representatives Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations and the Committee on Ways and Means launched an investigation into the BOOST program.

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NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) Board of Directors hereby gives notice that a special meeting is being called on Friday, October 06, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. at the Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighting (ARFF) Classroom located in the Airport Fire Station, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Saipan. The following items are on the agenda for the above referenced meeting:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes

II. PUBLIC COMMENT(S)

III. SPECIAL MEETING ITEM(S):
1. Law Enforcement Officers Exemption from Austerity Measures
2. Car Rental Concession (Saipan)
   a. Procurement Method
   b. Determination of Scope of Concession
   c. Evaluation Plan
3. Supplemental Budget Request: Rota West Harbor Marina Commercial Fencing
4. Executive Management

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION (if needed)

V. MISCELLANEOUS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

VI. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. A time limit may be imposed. Video Conferencing is also available via Zoom.
Zoom link: Meeting ID: 898 0318 0837
Passcode: 573227

KIMBERLYN KING-HINDS
Chairwoman, Board of Directors

Palacios welcomes formation of labor union, but…

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has welcomed the move of firefighters with the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services to form a labor union under the overall chapter organization, International Association of Fire Fighters.

"Certainly, it's their right. It's legal," said Palacios in an interview on Saturday.

However, the governor said, he is also concerned, saying hopefully when things are to be negotiated, they come with the understanding that every community not just the CNMI government and also companies who always have challenges with costs.

Palacios did not elaborate.

Public School System teachers tried to unionize back in 1990s but it just died.

Fire Captain Pual B. Sasamoto serves as the president of the Northern Marianas Professional Firefighters Union IAFF-Local 5355.

Sasamoto officially notified DFEMS Commissioner Juan A. Pua last Sept. 4 that the NMPFU IAFF-Local 5355 is the sole and exclusive representative for all full-time employees who are bargaining unit members employed by DFEMS.

CHAMBER

From page 1

Besides Asiana, the other carriers from South Korea that flies to Saipan are Jeju Air and T'way Air.

United Airlines is the only airline servicing the CNMI's only other tourism market, Japan.

"From the CNMI business perspective, we hope and anticipate other carriers to pick up the slack, whether that be Jeju or T'way," Guerrero said.

In addition, Guerrero said there is also hope that other airlines will partner with the CNMI in the months to come. However, even that may be a challenge as many tourist destinations are eying the same markets the CNMI is targeting.

"We have also heard interest from other carriers that are looking to fly to the CNMI, some from China, and perhaps others from Korea. There are also others from Japan but these plans and interest really relies on the projection of the demand in the markets. Like right now, Japan is still a very tough market. Meanwhile Korea is the market that many destinations are going after, as well as China, as the market is excited to travel, given that they have been locked down for quite some time," he said.

Because of this, Guerrero said the Chamber is hoping that the Commonwealth Ports Authority's efforts to get the CNMI exempted from the U.S. Department of Transportation's China Order Part 213—which imposes a cap on the number of flights from China to the United States—is successful.

"We are hoping that with the exception that CPA is trying to get from the federal government to exempt us from the USDOT's flight cap, if we were officially exempted, then we would be able to restart some tourism from China via direct flights," he said.

Saipan Tribune recently learned that Asiana discontinuing its flights in November has been in the books for some time now as Asiana and affiliated companies are currently in the process of a merger.

In addition, according to InTak Hwang, Asiana Airlines general manager for Saipan, Asiana projects a lower-than-usual season this November and the recent increase in airport landing fees in the CNMI has made the brief suspension necessary.

Overall, the suspension of Asiana's service come November is said to contribute to an over 30% decrease in the number of tourists coming to Saipan in the following months.

HOUSE

From page 1

Committee members are expected to talk about a review of their legal authority to conduct a legislative research/ investigation, rules and parameters for conducting legislative investigations, supporting records, and what's technically referred to as 1309 letters and subpoenas. A Letter 1309 in the Commonwealth Code refers to the acquisition of information by other lawful means. Committee members agreed last May to authorize Yumul to issue 1,309 letters and subpoenas.

At that time, Rep. Marisa Renee Flores (Ind-Saipan) stated that watching the previous 22nd Legislature's hearings on the BOOST Program showed that a lot of information that should have been kept confidential were passed out.

In response to House vice speaker Rep. Joel C. Camacho's (Ind-Saipan) question during the committee's hearing last May, House legal counsel John Bradley said witnesses have the option under both U.S. and CNMI constitutions to invoke their privilege not to talk if they think the question will incriminate them. He said the summoned witnesses, however, have to appear before the committee.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Seated are thirteen of the 18 students receiving the Saipan Chamber of Commerce scholarship yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan in Garapan.

STUDENTS

From page 1

Rabago, and Katriel Saures. The NMTI scholars were Hannah Blanco, Patrick Espiritu, Dennis Jacoba, Kevin Lizama, Haiou Sakisat, and Derek Tupas.

The NMC scholars are pursuing degrees in Liberal Arts with an emphasis in Education, Criminal Justice, Nursing, Business Management, Rehabilitation and Human Services, while the NMTI scholars are working on earning certifications in Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Electrical, and Automotive Technology.

Speaking during a pre-event interview, Chamber president Joseph Guerrero said, "This meeting today is special. …We just concluded our 14th Annual Chamber Golf Tournament this year. And this year, as in previous years, we've raised $12,000…and once again we're going to give out over 12 scholarships. …This is one way that the Chamber gives back to our community. It's our small way to help bring up the local workforce in the CNMI. …It's a feat that takes collaboration with all the partners [and] that really help encourage young adults and also older adults to further their education and training."

One of the recipients of the Fall 2023 Chamber scholarship, Richard Baleares, who is taking up Liberal Arts with an emphasis in Education at NMC, thanked the Chamber for their support of students pursuing higher education. "Their continued dedication in investing in the future is evident with today's ceremony. At the end of the day, students like us will eventually be in their shoes, helping to contribute to businesses and our communities in succeeding as one, just like the vision of the SCC."

PETS OF THE WEEK

German Shepherd-mix puppies and Peanut

German Shepherd-mix puppies

There are a lot of cute, fluffy, and adoptable German Shepherd-mix puppies available for adoption, along with Peanut, a Labrador-retriever-mix male. He was sadly surrendered by his owner but is super-friendly and a bit of a blockhead like a true Labrador dog.

Peanut, a Labrador-retriever-mix male.

Contact the Saipan Mayor's Office Animal Shelter in As Perdido if you're willing to give them a loving and caring home. Shelter hours are from Monday to Friday, from 7:30am to 4:30pm. Call (670)-234-3647 (DOGS) if you're interested.

For inquiries about veterinary services please reach out to Saipan Humane Society at info@saipanhumanesociety.org or Whatsapp +1 (670) 838-7387.

Saipan Tribune *is partnering with Lauren Cabrera, founder of the Saipan Humane Society, in collaboration with the SMO Animal Shelter in As Perdido, to feature their adoptable dogs into loving homes. Whether you are looking for a guard dog, lap dog, hiking buddy, or playful puppy, they most likely have the dog for you!*

ROTA

From page 1

present were Rufo T. Mafnas and Rebecca Agnes C. White.

Terlaje later said in an interview that the board's approval means they don't have to follow the standard source selection process and do it more quickly by just contacting vendors and telling them about their need for immediate temporary power.

"From there we look at who's providing the best solution and we can award it without having to wait for a long process of bidding evaluations, negotiations, and all of that. It's for temporary generation," Terlaje said.

She said the contract that will be an emergency procurement that's temporary and it will end when the new generator is up and running.

"The emergency procurement is for us to find a company or vendor that can bring an engine to Rota for temporary [power] generation while we overhaul the engine and then, at the same time, commission a new engine because it will take time to be installed at the facility and then get it up and running," Terlaje said.

She said Rota Resort's generator is back up right now and they were told that the engine is in good working condition and that CUC's engineer and mechanic are there.

"We will be sending our electrical engineer down to assist with the assessment of the engine before we connect it to our grid," Terlaje said.

She said Rota Resort's generator is not a permanent solution, as it is only an immediate backup.

Terlaje said their permanent solution is to get a new engine and that's what they will be putting in right now. "The funds have been identified already," she said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

Ogo seeks solutions to costly interisland travel

Rep. Julie A. Ogo (Ind-Saipan) wants to meet with Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) in hopes of finding a solution, through federal aid, to address the decision of the Commonwealth Ports Authority to increase passenger fees.

A statement from Ogo's office yesterday said the CPA decision is driving the price of interisland travel higher and makes them unaffordable, even for the government to provide necessary medical care to the people of Rota and Tinian.

Ogo

"It will escalate the cost of medical referrals and practically bring our tourism industry to its knees," said Ogo. "While I do understand the need to resolve budgetary challenges for the [CPA] to effectively operate, I do question the wisdom of this decision at a time when the CNMI is still trying to recover economically from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters."

Ogo contends that the difficulty in resolving this challenge may be the lack of communication between the CPA board of directors and the CNMI leadership to collaboratively work toward a resolution.

"We need to seek and tap into whatever federal subsidy that may be available to the CNMI, and diligently move forward to acquire that critical Essential Air Service designation because the CNMI government simply cannot find extra funding to subsidize the landing fee to keep the cost of air transportation at the present level at least," Ogo added.

The U.S. Department of Transportation, Small Community and Rural Air Services explains the EAS thus: "The Airline Deregulation Act, passed in 1978, gave air carriers almost total freedom to determine which markets to serve domestically and what fares to charge for that service. The EAS program was put in place to guarantee that small communities that were served by certificated air carriers before airline deregulation maintain a minimal level of scheduled air service. The U.S. Department of Transportation is mandated to provide eligible EAS communities with access to the National Air Transportation System. This is generally accomplished by subsidizing two roundtrips a day with 30- to 50-seat aircraft, or additional frequencies with aircraft with nine-seat or fewer, usually to a large- or medium-hub airport. The department currently subsidizes commuter and certificated air carriers to serve approximately 60 communities in Alaska and 115 communities in the lower 48 contiguous states that otherwise would not receive any scheduled air service."

In April this year, Sablan presented the CNMI's case to the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Transportation, requesting regulatory exemptions that would open the pathway for the CNMI to participate in the EAS program. Ogo wants to discuss this with Sablan and see how the CNMI local leadership can assist in this endeavor. ***(PR)***

'It costs nothing to be kind…but everything when you bully anyone'

PSS

Education interim commissioner Donna M. Flores reminds the Public School System community and its stakeholders of the importance of being kind and respectful as the BOE declared October "Bullying and Violence Prevention Month."

PSS

Board of Education secretary-treasurer Gregory Pat Borja signs the proclamation declaring October as "Bullying and Violence Prevention Month." The event was held yesterday at the cafeteria of the Dandan Middle School.

The month of October has been designated as "Bullying and Violence Prevention Month" across the CNMI Public School System.

Board of Education secretary-treasurer Gregory Pat Borja and Education interim commissioner Donna M. Flores led public education leaders and stakeholders in a proclamation signing ceremony yesterday morning at the cafeteria of the Dandan Middle School.

Joining them were associate commissioner for Administrative Services Eric Magofna, senior director for Student and Support Services Yvonne R. Pangelinan, school administrators, counselors, teachers, and students from various Saipan elementary and middle high schools in witnessing the signing ceremony.

Borja expressed concern over the impact of bullying, particularly how it affects the mental and emotional well-being of students and adolescents. He appealed to students, parents, and the community to engage in a variety of awareness and prevention activities designed to make public schools safer for all children and adolescents.

In her remarks, Flores extolled the virtue of kindness: "It costs nothing to be kind and courteous, but it may cost everything, including money, freedom, and sadly even a life, when you are cruel, mean, and causing harm to another person."

She reminded students that bullying is an "unwanted behavior by another individual or group of individuals" that is highly likely to be repeated. It can cause psychological, social and or educational harm to an individual.

Bullying comes in various forms—physical, verbal, social, or via the internet (cyberbullying). It also comes in many forms—and "none of which is acceptable," Flores reminded students.

Bullying can take place in any campus, anywhere, and anytime. It is a serious issue that happens to one in every five students. According to the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 27.9% of middle school students and 9.9% of high school students who responded to the survey reporting being bullied on school property.

"And this is why we are all here today, to bring awareness to this social ill in hopes of empowering us all to be better citizens, better school mates and a better, more inclusive community, simply by being kind. I'm not saying you have to like everyone, but you can be civil (or polite). There's enough hate in this world; we don't have to contribute to that," Flores said.

She added: "We are so fortunate to live here [on] our islands where we still value family and friends; there are so many places that no longer respect that. Let's not be those people. We don't know what others are already struggling with in life. Let's face it—everybody is going through something and, oftentimes, just being in the company of others and being included, is the only comfort. So, let's all be kind, especially in the spaces we share with others, including cyberspace."

Flores also reminded students that schools have resources that can help students, including those who need services to handle, prevent, and stop bullying.

"[L]et's challenge ourselves by being the better person. It may take a lot of practice, but it's well worth it and I guarantee you it will not only make others feel good, but it will also make you feel good. And, who knows, maybe one day, you will be a role model for your younger sibling, cousin, or neighbor. And if anything, always remember that 'a smile costs nothing, but gives much,'" she added. ***(PR)***

ADDENDUM NO. 1
RFP23-GOV-42300097

"DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS HVAC SYSTEM REPLACEMENT"

The following changes to this Request for Proposal have been approved by the Acting Director of Procurement Services:

• For bidders within the CNMI, **one (1) original, one (1) hard copy, and one (1) flash drive** containing a digital copy of sealed bids must be submitted to the Acting Director of Procurement Services located at Building 12552 Anatahan Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan no later than **10:00 A.M. ChST, October 27, 2023.**

• For bidders located outside the CNMI, **one (1) original, one (1) hard copy, and one (1) flash drive** containing a digital copy of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **10:00 A.M., ChST October 27, 2023** and mailed to the Acting Director of Procurement Services at P.O. Box 10008 C.K., Saipan, MP, 96950, and must be received no later than **November 07, 2023.** Failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid. Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement Services located at Building No. 12552 Anatahan Drive, Capitol Hill on Saipan at **10:00 A.M. ChST, November 08, 2023.** However, if no notices of intent to bid are received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at **10:00 A.M. ChST October 27, 2023.**

Please note: All other requirements stated in the Request for Proposal shall remain as stated.

The provisions of the CNMI Procurement Regulations, NMIAC Section 70-30.3-725 and 70.30.3-730 prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks, and Contingent Fees shall apply.

The CNMI Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids or portions thereof, and waive any immaterial defects if to do so would be in the best interest of the CNMI Government.

/S/ Brien S. Nicholas Jr.
Acting Director, Division of Procurement Services

COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORP.
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
MOBILE CLINIC SCHEDULE
OCT 27
Adult Health Check
Update on personal medical history, blood pressure check, glucose check, resources & referrals
Marianas Business Plaza, Susupe from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
OCT 4 12
Child Health Check
For children 0-17 years old. Measurements and growth, anticipatory guidance, resources & referrals
Nutrition Assistance Program , As Lito from 1:00PM- 4:30PM
Dan Dan Children's Park from 1:00PM - 4:30PM
OCT 6 14 25
Women's Health Check
For women who haven't seen a healthcare provider longer than 1 year, pap smears, breast exams, pre/post partum care, resources & referrals
Guma Hustisia, Susupe from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
(Day of Unity) Capitol Hill Softball Field from 11:00AM - 02:30PM
San Roque Parish from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
OCTOBER
BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH
WHAT TO BRING:
INSURANCE CARD (Medicaid and most private insurances accepted)
VALID PHOTO ID (Driver's license, Passport, Mayor's ID, etc.)
(670) 287-9926/9927/9929
www.chcc.health
@cnmichcc

RSBDC, Rota Chamber to host free biz marketing seminar

The Rota Small Business Development Center at Northern Marianas College, in partnership with Rota Chamber of Commerce, will be hosting "Brick & Mortar to Click & Order," a seminar targeting current business owners looking to leverage social media to increase sales, expand operations, or to learn basic marketing tips to increase social media presence.

The training is scheduled to take place on Friday, Oct. 6, 2023 from 9am to 11am and will be held at the Northern Marianas College's Rota Campus in Room A1.

With the exponential growth of social media platforms, including them in a business' marketing strategy is a must today. During this session, attendees will focus on determining which platforms should be utilized, developing engaging content for those channels, as well as measuring success. This workshop is designed to equip attendees with tips and tools they can use to make the most of their social media pages.

"In just three years, the landscape of social media has undergone a transformative evolution, morphing from a mere platform for engagement to a dynamic marketplace of influence. Businesses must now adapt their marketing strategies to navigate this new terrain, leveraging authentic connections, meaningful content, and strategic partnerships to thrive in a world where relationships matter more than ever," said Roman Tudela, CNMI SBDCN marketing manager and outreach specialist.

Registration for the training is now open and interested parties are encouraged to secure their spots.

Event Details

■ Event Name: Brick & Mortar to Click & Order

■ Date: Friday, Oct. 6, 2023

■ Time: 9am-11am

■ Registration Link: https://marianas.ecenterdirect.com/events/1019129

Presenter Roman Tudela is a Northern Marianas College Alumni where he received his Associates Degree in Business Administration and his Bachelor's Degree in Business Management. He continued forward and received a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Texas of the Permian Basin. The skill sets acquired from his prior roles has allowed Tudela to expand his business career profile by becoming the CNMI Small Business Development Center Network's first marketing manager and outreach specialist and is the current vice president for the NMI Chapter of Society of Human Resources Management.

The CNMI SBDC Network promotes a business-friendly economic infrastructure in the community, builds entrepreneurial capacity and financial literacy within that community, and provides current and nascent small businesses with the technical assistance, counseling, training, and support they need to innovate, adapt, and grow.

The CNMI Small Business Development Center Network (CNMI SBDC) Network comprises the CNMI SBDC lead center located in Saipan, the Rota SBDC, and Tinian SBDC. CNMI SBDC Network is partially funded by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Northern Marianas College. All opinions, conclusions, or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA. Requests for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance. Language assistance services are available for limited English proficient individuals with at least two weeks advance notice. For arrangements, contact your local SBDC at P.O.Box 501250 Saipan, MP 96950, Tel: (670) 237-6888, or email adelpha.magofna@marianas.edu. Services are extended to the to the public on a non-disciplinary basis. ***(PR)***

First Taiwan-Guam Austronesian Int'l Arts Exhibition to showcase cultural heritage

The University of Guam, in collaboration with the National Taitung University, the National Museum of Taiwan Literature, and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Guam, will present the first Taiwan-Guam Austronesian International Arts Exhibition. The exhibit is open to the public for free from Oct. 6 to 10 at the Hyatt Regency Guam's Santa Rosa and Santa Rita meeting rooms between 10am and 4pm.

UOG

A University of Guam delegation on a tour of the Center of Austronesian Culture at National Taitung University in Taiwan in January 2023. The visit led to the development of the 2023 Taiwan-Guam Austronesian International Arts Exhibition, which will take place Oct. 6-10 at the Hyatt Regency Guam. From left, Kuan-Ju Chen, senior liaison of the Asia Pacific Universities Consortium, UOG; Carlos Taitano, director of Global Learning & Engagement, UOG; Dr. Mitsuda Yayoi, assistant professor of Austronesian studies, NTU; Dr. Futuru C.L. Tsai, director of the Center of Austronesian Culture, NTU; UOG President Anita Borja Enriquez; Chia Hung Kao, director of Center of International Affairs, NTU.

"Guam and Taiwan may seem to be distant from each other, yet their indigenous CHamoru and Taiwanese Austronesian cultures share a profound connection," said Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez, president of the University of Guam. "Both cultures have evolved over centuries, shaped by their island environments and vibrant histories."

With the theme "Indigo from the Blue: Sacred Wisdom of Our Islands and Ocean," the exhibition will focus on art, literature, and culture of the Austronesian peoples. Paintings, sculptures, videos, traditional clothing, and other art forms will be featured.

"We are excited to create an unforgettable experience that celebrates the deep cultural heritage and unique traditions of our islands," said Dr. Kuan-Ju Chen, senior liaison of the Asia Pacific Universities Consortium at UOG and co-chair of the exhibition's planning committee. "The collaboration with our partners in Taiwan will enable us to bring the beauty and cultural richness of Taiwan and Guam to a wider audience."

In addition to the exhibition, five special presentations by distinguished language and culture scholars are on the agenda:

Saturday, Oct. 7

Hyatt Regency Guam, Tour Lounge

■ 9am-10:30am

"Endangered Languages and Language Policies in Taiwan"

By Dr. Mitsuda Yayoi

Assistant Professor of Austronesian Studies, National Taitung University

■ 10:30am-12pm

"From the Forest to the Sea, From the Tribe to the World – What Tina Says"

By Salizan Takisvilaninan (Chao, Tsung-Yi)

National Museum of Taiwan Literature

■ 2pm-3:30pm

"The Revitalization of Bark Cloth Making and its Socio-Cultural Meaning in E'tolan Amis Community in Southeast Taiwan"

By Dr. Futuru C.L. Tsai

Professor of Austronesian Studies, National Taitung University

Sunday, Oct. 8

The Fokai Shop (135 Fujita Rd. #103, Tamuning)

■ 5pm-5:30pm

"Traditional Wayfinding from the Position of Guam"

By Larry Raigetal and Dr. Melissa Taitano

Assistant Professors, UOG Micronesian Area Research Center

Pairourou (Traditional Micronesian Navigators)

■ 5:30pm-6pm

"Slinging in the CHamoru Culture: Past, Present, and Future" / Slingstone Workshop

By Roman Dela Cruz

Co-founder, Fokai Industries

Curator, TheEffect

For more information about the art exhibition, please contact Dr. Velma Yamashita, associate professor of art at UOG, at yamashitav@triton.uog.edu.

For more information about Taiwan-Guam and Asia Pacific Studies Center projects, please contact Dr. Kuan-Ju Chen, senior liaison of the Asia Pacific Universities Consortium at UOG, at chenkj@triton.uog.edu. ***(PR)***

A painting titled "Dilok Mo'na (Tilt Forward)" by Jerrold Dwayne Castro is one of the featured art pieces in the 2023 Taiwan-Guam Austronesian International Arts Exhibition, which will be open to the public from Oct. 6 to 10 at the Hyatt Regency Guam.

NATIONAL TAITING UNIVERSITY

A wooden sculpture by a Taiwanese artist named Eki shows a man standing on a nuclear waste bucket, referencing the island of Lanyu that the government used as a nuclear waste site in 1975. It will be one of the featured art pieces in the 2023 Taiwan-Guam Austronesian International Arts Exhibition, which will be open to the public from Oct. 6 to 10 at the Hyatt Regency Guam.

Saipan Mayor's Office participates in PSS high school Co-op Program

The Saipan Mayor's Office is pleased to announce its active participation in the Public School System high school Co-op Program. This program provides an excellent opportunity for multiple high school students to engage in part-time internships within the mayor's office, offering them valuable exposure to the organization's functions and operations.

These students will be assigned to various departments within the mayor's office gaining insights into the diverse activities within our office.

Additionally, this program underscores the municipality's commitment to its community and the efforts it undertakes for the safety and welfare of our community.

Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Camacho firmly believes that this program holds great benefits for our youth.

"I would like to thank PSS for providing our youth with various programs. Programs like the PSS Co-op Program provides our students the chance to explore potential career paths that align with their interests and skills, ultimately helping them discover the best fit for their future pursuits," said Camacho. "I also hope that program participants will contemplate a future career with the municipality, dedicated to serving and improving our community."

For any questions or more information, contact the Saipan Mayor's Office at (670) 234-6208 or check out their website at saipanmayor.cnmi.gov. Office hours are Monday through Friday, from 7:30am to 4:30pm. The Saipan Mayor's Office is also open through lunch. ***(PR)***

BPDO advancing digital equity in CNMI

The Broadband Policy and Development Office proudly joins the 7th Annual Digital Inclusion Week, from Oct. 2 to 6, 2023, a national week of action to raise awareness and amplify the importance of digital equity. This year's theme, "Building Connected Communities," aligns perfectly with our mission to bring digital access and skills to everyone in the CNMI.

Taking meaningful steps to "Build Connected Communities," the BPD Office hosts a pivotal Affordable Connectivity Program outreach and sign-up event during Digital Inclusion Week, inviting residents to transform their digital lives through affordable access.

At the heart of Digital Inclusion Week is an active enrollment campaign for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The ACP is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program designed to assist families and households facing financial constraints in obtaining essential internet services required for work, education, healthcare, and other critical needs.

The Affordable Connectivity Program offers multiple avenues for qualification, making it accessible to a wide range of households:

■ Household Income: Eligibility is determined based on your household income.

■ Government Assistance Programs: Participation in certain government assistance programs, such as NAP, Medicaid, WIC, and others, can qualify your household for the ACP. Additionally, all students enrolled in the Public School System, receiving free meals are eligible. Any college student receiving federal pell grants are eligible as well.

■ Lifeline Benefit: If you or anyone in your household already receives a Lifeline benefit, your household is eligible for the ACP.

What makes the program even more inclusive is that any member of your household can make the entire household eligible. For instance, if your child or dependent participates in the Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch Program or is enrolled in a USDA Community Eligibility Provision school, your household automatically qualifies for the ACP benefit.

Highlighting the significance of this event, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang kicked off the festivities with a proclamation signing ceremony last Sept. 18. Their commitment to digital inclusion underscores the importance of ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to connect to the digital world, regardless of their economic circumstances.

Digital inclusion encompasses three critical areas: affordable internet, access to suitable devices, and digital skills training-basic essentials still out of reach for millions of Americans. "This week serves as an opportunity to celebrate the progress made, be visible and raise awareness, and to extend our reach within the community," said special assistant Glen Hunter.

"We look forward to highlighting the incredible digital inclusion work happening in the CNMI during this national week of recognition," adds Hunter. "Our collective efforts help bridge the digital divide, and this week is our opportunity to ensure these initiatives are recognized and supported on a broader scale."

The Broadband Policy and Development Office extends an invitation to advocates, policymakers, community leaders, educators, researchers, and all committed to digital equity, to help make this Digital Inclusion Week a seminal moment in our ongoing efforts to ensure that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the digital resources they need to fully participate in society.

For more information about the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), please visit www.getinternet.gov or visit the CNMI Broadband Policy and Development Office website at www.bpd.cnmi.gov. If families need any assistance registering for the ACP, please don't hesitate to contact our office directly at (670)287-2555/4.

National Digital Inclusion Alliance advances digital equity by supporting community programs and equipping policymakers to act. Working collaboratively with more than 1,400 digital inclusion practitioners, NDIA advocates for equitable broadband access, tech devices, digital skills training, and tech support. For more information, visit digitalinclusion.org. ***(PR)***

DRAW YOUR TEACHER WINNERS CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/

MV Draw Your Teacher Art Competition winners with their respective artworks. From left, Grace Christian Academy teacher Cathy Merencilla, second grade winner Colin James Lilles from Green Meadow School with teacher Bona Angeles, third grade winner Yohan Jeong from Oleai Elementary School with teacher Mannelyn Cabrera, fourth grade winner Margaret Robonei from Oleai Elementary School with teacher Roselle Carreon, and fifth grade winner Sera Guerrero from Mt. Carmel School with teacher Zandra A. Tapay. Not in photo is first grade winner Dohyun "Ethan" Kim from GCA.

NEH announces $1.3M in funding through new Pacific Islands Cultural Initiative

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In conjunction with the first-ever White House Summit on Building Climate Resilient Communities, the National Endowment for the Humanities is announcing the Pacific Islands Cultural Initiative, a new agency initiative focused on fortifying cultural heritage and resilience in Amerika Samoa, Guahan (Guam), Hawaii, and the CNMI.

NEH's Pacific Islands Cultural Initiative will support (1) convenings and technical assistance for its affiliate humanities councils in the U.S. Pacific Islands, including through the creation of a permanent regional network; (2) community-based efforts that embed climate resilience and safeguard cultural resources against the impacts of the climate crisis on the region, including in response to federally declared disasters; (3) Native and Indigenous language and cultural revitalization, documentation, oral history collection, and public humanities programming that strengthen and elevate U.S. Pacific Islander voices; and (4) research and curriculum development in the humanities for K-12 and higher education faculty and institutions in the U.S. Pacific Islands.

NEH has committed $1.3 million in its first round of funding for the Pacific Islands Cultural Initiative. This includes $880,000 in supplemental funding over a three-year period to the Amerika Samoa Humanities Council, Humanities Guahan, Hawaii Council for the Humanities, and the Northern Marianas Humanities Council, NEH's affiliate humanities councils in the Pacific. NEH's funding will support the creation of a permanent regional network to facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing among the four councils and strengthen relationships between the Pacific councils and their constituents, as well as with diasporic Pacific Islander communities in the United States. NEH's funding will also support the development of local humanities programs, resources, and activities tailored to the cultural needs and challenges of their respective communities, with the aims of (1) amplifying Pacific Islander history, heritage, and perspectives in relation to local and global issues; (2) supporting cultural protection and climate resilience; and (3) building capacity and professional development opportunities for Pacific Islander humanities organizations and practitioners, such as the following:

■ Amerika Samoa Humanities Council: Funding will support the creation of a new "Talanoa" ("talk" or "discussion" in Samoan) Initiative, designed to connect generations of Samoans around topics of Samoan culture, customs, traditional food ways, and religion.

■ Humanities Guahan: Funding will support the digitization of educational and cultural resources to preserve Indigenous CHamoru and broader Micronesian perspectives, experiences, and scholarship and make them widely accessible.

■ Hawaii Council for the Humanities: Funding will support the creation of exchange opportunities between the humanities councils in the Pacific to develop and train Hawai'i's next generation of humanities leaders and preserve local Indigenous knowledge and traditions.

■ Northern Marianas Humanities Council: Funding will support the documentation and digital archiving of Chamorro and Carolinian heritage threatened by climate-related events, preserving and making community-held knowledge, history, and cultural practices widely accessible.

"NEH's humanities council partners in the Pacific face unique challenges due to their geography and historic underinvestment in the region," said NEH Chair Shelly C. Lowe (Navajo). "NEH is proud to play a role in promoting the resilience of the Pacific region's vibrant cultures while providing vital support and relief. We look forward to working in partnership with the Pacific humanities councils in making a lasting and positive impact on the Pacific's cultural landscape and helping Pacific Island communities preserve their rich cultural heritage for generations to come."

NEH has also committed $500,000 in emergency relief funding to support cultural and educational institutions affected by the 2023 wildfires in Maui and Typhoon Mawar in Guam. These funds will (1) provide for the preservation and conservation of impacted cultural resources in Hawaii and Guam; (2) recover and safeguard historical artifacts; (3) support local initiatives aimed at documenting and preserving the cultural heritage of affected communities; (4) and build capacity through cultural heritage disaster preparedness training and resources. Community conversations and oral history collection programs may be developed to help communities grieve, recover, and build hope through the humanities.

"[This initiative] is a major milestone for U.S. Pacific Island jurisdictions," said executive director of Northern Marianas Humanities Council, Leo Pangelinan. "This ushers in federal support for regional cultural leaders to work together on issues that center on Pacific Island knowledge, traditions, values, and way of life." "Humaities Guahan is most excited about the significance of recognizing Pacific Islander councils nationally through NEH's Pacific Islands Cultural Initiative," said executive director for Humanities Guahan, Kimberlee Kihleng. "We are thrilled at the prospect of collaboration with our council partners to foster a culture of knowledge sharing, which elevates Pacific Islander voices and experiences and facilitates humanities capacity building with our island communities."

Hawaii Council for the Humanities executive director Aiko Yamashiro noted "This initiative is an opportunity for Hawai i to reconnect with our Pacific Islander relatives across the barrier of political history, at the cultural, organizational, spiritual, and human level. Building this Oceanic community will strengthen our possibility to innovate and share our islander wisdom with the rest of the world."

In response to the initiative, Tauaisafune Niualama Taifane, executive director of the Amerika Samoa Humanities Council, shared a Samoan proverb saying, "O le Aso ma le Filiga, O le Aso ma le Mata'igatila." ("Every day brings its own views of what is on the horizon; each day brings its own choices.")

Amerika Samoa Humanities Council, Humanities Guahan, Hawaii Council for the Humanities, and Northern Marianas Humanities Council are part of a network of 56 state, jurisdictional, and interim humanities councils that partner with NEH to help support local humanities programs, institutions, and events across the United States and U.S. jurisdictions. Funding awarded through the Pacific Islands Cultural Initiative is given in addition to the annual operating support NEH provides to the network of state and jurisdictional humanities councils.

NEH's first Policy Advisor for Pacific Island Affairs, Moana Palelei Iose (Samoan/Nu'uuli), will serve as the agency liaison and lead outreach efforts to Pacific Island communities for this new NEH initiative.

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at: neh.gov. ***(PR)***

Opinion

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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Getting healthy should not ruin Americans' credit

Many Americans drowning in debt did not get there by spending irresponsibly on televisions, cars or pricey goodies. Medical bills have become the largest source of debt in collections—more than credit cards, utilities and auto loans combined—which is why the Biden administration's plan to keep unpaid medical bills from affecting a person's credit score would be a life-altering change for millions.

The administration announced a major initiative in September to craft new federal rules barring unpaid medical bills from affecting patients' credit scores. If enacted, the changes would potentially help tens of millions of people by removing information on credit reports that can make it harder for Americans to get a job, rent an apartment or secure a loan.

One in 3 U.S. adults has medical debt, which between 2009 and 2020 became the largest source of debt Americans owed collections agencies, totaling at least $140 billion, according to research published in 2021 by the Journal of the American Medical Association. That $140 billion doesn't include all medical bills owed to health care providers, only the outstanding debt held by collection agencies. Some 11 million Americans have medical debt above $2,000, according to a survey by health policy research group KFF of all outstanding medical debt, including medical bills put on credit cards. Three million people have debts above $10,000. For many, it's a financial hole that only sinks further as they confront more complex medical problems.

Medical debt is unlike any other consumer spending. Unlike buying products from retailers, health care providers usually provide little if any upfront detail of what a procedure will cost. Patients seeking treatment are often bounced between physicians, specialists, clinics and labs, without any clear menu of prices along the way. And Americans seeking emergency treatment are hardly in a position to comparison shop. In other words, this type of debt doesn't necessarily reflect reckless spending, but the opaqueness of America's health care system, where prices are shaped through Byzantine formulas involving insurers, their networks, discounts, copays and deductibles.

Debt included on a credit score is meant to signal a person's monetary fitness—and, by extension, their financial trustworthiness. Low scores can limit a person's job and housing prospects, and medical debt in particular can discourage some from seeking further health care.

Yet research shows that owing medical debt is not a reliable predictor of a person's overall financial steadiness. Indeed, many with medical debt are merely struggling to manage their health concerns within a system that makes price-shopping virtually impossible. Not surprisingly, women shoulder a disproportionate burden of medical debt—likely related to childbirth expenses—as do Black Americans, who report carrying nearly twice the debt of white or Hispanic adults. Americans are also more likely to have significant medical debt if they live in rural areas or in one of the 10 states (including Florida) that have not expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare.

Removing these bills from credit reports won't erase the debt;

See GETTING on Page 9

The US deserves a better vaccine rollout than this

By LISA JARVIS
Bloomberg Opinion

Lisa Jarvis is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering biotech, health care and the pharmaceutical industry. Previously, she was executive editor of* Chemical & Engineering News.

The rollout of this fall's COVID vaccine has been frustrating. When CDC authorized the COVID shots for everyone 6 months and older on Sept. 12, the expectation was they'd be available within days. That hasn't proven to be the case. Instead, appointments seem readily available, only to be canceled at the last minute; surprise bills for vaccines touted as free abound; and the littlest children seem left out altogether.

Avoiding a tripledemic this winter hinges on public health officials striking the right message to consumers, one that emphasizes both the new COVID booster and a flu shot—and, for those eligible, one of the new RSV vaccines. But convincing people to roll up their sleeves won't help without a shot ready to sink into their arms.

So what has gone wrong? A confluence of factors, some clearly avoidable. For one, pharmacies seem to have flubbed scheduling, allowing people to sign up when either shots or pharmacists weren't available.

A few hitches were perhaps to be expected this year—it's the first time insurers, rather than the government, is paying for the shot. But not every site accepts every form of insurance, and some insurers have yet to offer the needed billing codes for the vaccine.

It's hard not to wonder if it all could (and should) have gone better.

Public health authorities in the US already faced an uphill battle this season. Last year, only 17% of the population got the updated COVID booster, and CDC data shows just 46.9% of adults got their flu shot. And a new survey conducted by the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases found that just 40% of adults in the U.S. planned to get the new COVID shot, while 43% said they were unsure or did not plan to get a flu shot.

The pandemic offered Americans a rare glimpse of a world where vaccines could be distributed efficiently and access is relatively simple—the shots had one distributor (the government), were free for everyone at every site, regardless of insurance, and, for the initial rounds of boosters at least, were generally widely available within days of being authorized. Now, we're back to our old, too often clunky system. "COVID has conditioned us to expect very rapid and efficient rollouts of an intervention into a very complex health care system," says Larry Kociolek, medical director of infection prevention and control at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. "That leads to some expectations that are difficult to meet."

The challenge of finding a COVID vaccine has been particularly acute for parents. Nearly all of the roughly 300 kids signed up for seasonal vaccines at Elias Kass's pediatric primary care practice in Seattle were supposed to get both COVID and flu shots. But the pediatric COVID shots have yet to arrive, and he's spent hours trying to figure out when they will come in. The state's department of health attributes the problem to a delay with the distributor, McKesson, but Kass says no one is offering clear guidance on when vaccines will become available or how many doses his practice will initially get.

Parents' urgency comes as hospitalizations from COVID hit a recent peak. And while children are at low risk of the most serious outcomes of the disease, parents worry their kids will get the virus before the vaccine is finally available.

Being able to receive both shots at once matters to families, Kass says. Beyond the inconvenience of scheduling multiple outings—like missing work and taking kids out of school or day care—there's also "all of the drama" that comes with coaxing sometimes fearful children to roll up their sleeves, he says. And while pharmacies seem to have some supply, the lion's share of kids tend to get their vaccines at their doctor's office. Many states do not allow children under age 3 to be vaccinated at a pharmacy counter.

That leaves parents, particularly those with toddlers, in a frustrating limbo. Many have been told their best bet is to keep calling their pediatrician's office or refreshing the provider's website in hopes that appointments will magically appear.

Even more vexing, the situation might not feel much better next year. Distribution and insurance coverage should be more routine by then, but COVID continues to bedevil the world with its refusal to settle into a seasonal pattern."You can be very confident that the flu is going to start sometime between November and February every single year," Kociolek says. That provides some wiggle room if the fall flu shot rollout is delayed. Without that same predictability for COVID, vaccine supply could routinely arrive out of sync with demand. And that doesn't bode well for improving uptake.

That would be a real shame. Vaccines that combine COVID and flu into a single shot could be one solution to the messiness, but are still several years away. Until then, more transparency about the status of the vaccine supply would help.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Concerns regarding the FY 2024 budget and a call for action

By EDWIN P. ALDAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Edwin P. Aldan is the mayor of the Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan.

As we face significant financial challenges in the year ahead, the recent budget bill signed into law by our governor has imposed limitations that will impact on our ability to serve our communities effectively.

A few key issues and concerns pertaining to the fiscal year 2024 budget for the Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan are the vetoing of 24 FTEs under the Tinian Mayor's Office, the lack of operational funding for government departments and agencies, the utility payments that was anticipated to be covered by the central government, and the interisland medical referral funding.

The vetoing of 24 FTEs under the Tinian Mayor's Office is worrisome, as these individuals play a crucial role in maintaining the public services extended to our community. The larger concern with the removal of the 24 FTEs under the CNMI General Fund is the funding for these positions in fiscal year 2025. If the CNMI's revenue does not increase it will prompt the complete removal of the 24 FTEs for the second senatorial district.

Furthermore, the lack of funding for government operations is an issue that raises similar concerns. Our government departments and agencies rely on adequate financial resources to carry out their daily responsibilities diligently. Insufficient funding can lead to reduced staffing levels, hampering our ability to respond swiftly to emergencies and address the needs of our citizens effectively. It may force us to make tough choices, such as cutting back on essential programs that provide vital support or limiting our investment in infrastructure development that promotes economic growth. Given our current financial constraints, cost-cutting measures will more than likely be implemented to cover for utility payments, fuel, communications, etc. that are critical to the functioning of our departments and agencies to prevent any disruption of essential services.

The removal of the interisland medical referral assistance is a particularly distressing development. Our residents, especially those that reside on the islands of Rota and Tinian, depend on access to comprehensive medical care, often necessitating referrals to specialized facilities on other islands. I strongly urge the Executive Branch and the Legislature to work with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. to assist in reinstating or addressing this vital assistance to safeguard the health and well-being of the CNMI residents residing on Rota and Tinian.

Lastly, it is of utmost importance that our first responders are exempted from the current austerity measures to ensure their continued capability to serve our community optimally. This has always been a common practice for the CNMI to ensure that essential departments such as the Department of Public Safety and Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services respond to any emergencies at any given moment. I firmly believe they should be exempted from the reduction of work hours in fiscal year 2024.

As a government, we are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the smooth functioning of various public services and programs. However, this year's budget will pose significant financial challenges for CNMI departments and agencies this fiscal year. While difficult decisions lie ahead, we are committed to approach them with careful deliberation, mindful of the potential consequences they may have on our residents' lives. Although we recognize and understand the importance of the services we provide, we also understand the need for fiscal responsibility. We will explore every avenue to streamline our operations, optimize our resources, and identify alternative funding sources where available. By doing so, we aim to strike a delicate balance that retains critical services while living within our means.

By the same token, I urge our legislators to identify reasonable revenue generating bills that could potentially assist all three senatorial districts in filling the financial gaps. I extend my gratitude to the Legislature and the governor for addressing the fiscal year 2024 budget that avoided a potential government shutdown.

Should men pay on dates as reparations for the gender wage gap?

By JEAN GUERRERO
LOS ANGELES TIMES

For years, I split the bill on dates. As a Latina from a lineage of women whose lives had been micro-managed by family patriarchs, I thought I was breaking bad generational patterns by interacting with men as equals rather than as providers.

But recently, I started getting pushback from some of my friends. They argued that because of the persisting gender pay gap, it's actually now properly feminist to expect men to pay on first dates and contribute more financially in relationships.

One friend instructed me: "Don't even think about reaching for your purse." The thought of possibly coercing a man into paying for my dinner, however, just seemed wrong.

Still, this discussion did make me wonder: Should I expect men to pay on dates as a form of reparations for generational harm?

"The problem with framing being taken out to dinner by a man as a form of reparations is that it's privately consumed," Juliet Williams, a UCLA gender studies professor, told me. "It's not an accounting for injustice in any way that's visible or acknowledged. We have to be careful not to just label anything that's personally advantageous as somehow politically justified."

But many women believe that in our unequal times, it's only fair for men to pay, and not just because men still out-earn women. Women also tend to spend more on date prep, such as makeup and manicures to meet female beauty standards. Some women believe men should cover the costs of not only dates, but transportation to and from. In a viral TikTok video, L.A. resident Gabby Fe, 27, says: "I expect a man to pay for the date. Yes, the whole entire date. That includes my Uber to the date and my Uber back to my house."

She told me she sees this as compensation for women's sacrifices in relationships. It's also proof of serious interest. "I want to feel wanted," she said.

But many straight men perceive such expectations as evidence of women's low empathy for their struggles. In the U.S., men are now behind women in educational attainment and workforce participation. Amid these problems, women's expectations of free dates can seem entitled or vindictive.

More choices for women—like bearing and raising children without men, using sperm donors and IVF or platonic co-parenting—also mean that straight men with fewer financial resources can face an uphill battle. It's hard for them to compete with younger men who may be more willing to pay for their dates.

Zach Gottlieb, 17, an L.A. high school student who advocates for better mental health among Gen Z'ers with a focus on boys, told me he pays "on every single first date." For him and many other straight young men, paying on first dates is less about valuing traditional gender roles than about delighting in the ritual.

"It's masculine affirming for me, but that's not really why I do it," he told me. "I really do it because it's romantic for both of us."

Interestingly, Gen Z women are more likely to believe in a 50-50 approach to dating expenses than Gen Z men. One study found that men ages 18 to 25 are more likely than older generations to feel guilty if they don't pay the bill, even though their female peers are less likely to mind contributing than older women.

This embrace of retro early courting among straight young men doesn't appear to be rooted in ideology but rather in style and etiquette. Gen Z'ers are more likely than older daters to reject traditional gender roles and identify as LGBTQ+.

Among young people, the question of who pays often depends on who proposed the date. C.C., a 21-year-old trans man in L.A., told me that he and his girlfriend take turns paying. "There is a part of me that wants to treat her like a princess, but it's also nice to be a guy and be treated like a princess," he told me.

But for many cis-gender heterosexual men, masculinity is still tied up with providing for women—even if it's not romantic. I learned this while dining with my sister and her close friend J.G., 39, who insisted on paying for us and often buys meals for his female friends. "I feel like less of a man if I go 50-50," he says.

In many cases, what appears as a gift comes with expectations of romantic interest, which isn't verifiable in the world of dating apps until after the first date. For that reason, many women refuse to let men pay.

In her book "For the Love of Men," the feminist writer Liz Plank, 36, describes going on a "chivalry cleanse," freeing herself of a power imbalance that can arise from accepting men's money. But since then, she's reconsidered. Now, she says, "My rule of thumb is that the way that money is spent in the relationship should reflect the financial reality of each person in the relationship."

Should socioeconomic status instead of gender determine who pays? Many young people told me that taking personal financial situations into account in dating is just common sense.

"Overall men are paid more than women, but that is not a universal, and that's not a reason the journeyman carpenter has to pay for lunch with the corporate lawyer," the feminist writer Rebecca Solnit told me. In other words, there is no right answer that applies to everybody. Personal financial situations and preferences matter.

Of course, a good way to reduce the stress of all of this is by making dates less expensive. Sometimes a sunset stroll can be just as romantic as five-star dining—and there's no question about who should pick up the tab.

Jean Guerrero is an opinion columnist at the Los Angeles Times.

GETTING

From page 8

rather, it keeps collectors from weaponizing the information to further harm consumers who typically never sought to incur this expense in the first place. Of course, the details matter, and we'll reserve judgment as the administration develops the rules over the coming year. But this measure is a well-intentioned response to a crisis facing millions and a welcome signal to the health care industry to make medical costs more transparent.

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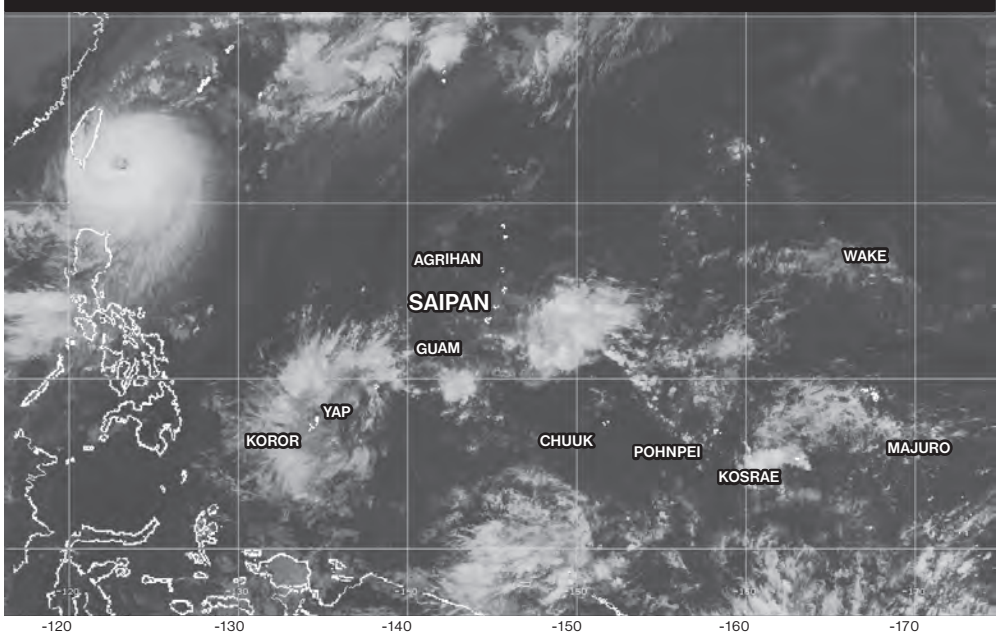
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 15 to 20 mph, becoming southeast Thursday night.	Partly sunny with scattered showers. Southeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	Breezy. Cloudy with showers likely and a chance of thunderstorms.
87° / 79°	87° / 78°	87° / 78°	86° / 79°	86° / 79°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:02 AM, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Isolated showers continue to cross the region, with the latest satellite imagery showing more robust about 100 miles to the east. Altimetry shows seas are averaging near 6 feet. The latest buoy observation from Ipan shows a water temperature of 86 degrees.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	87° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorm	85° / 79°
Yap	Thunderstorm	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	88° / 76°
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	88° / 76°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	87° / 83°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:07 AM	6:03 PM
Friday	6:07 AM	6:03 PM
Saturday	6:07 AM	6:02 PM
Sunday	6:07 AM	6:01 PM
Monday	6:07 AM	6:01 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	11:29 AM	10:48 PM
Friday	-	12:24 PM	11:43 PM
Saturday	-	1:16 PM	-
Sunday	12:37 AM	2:02 PM	-
Monday	1:30 AM	2:44 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	55° / 50°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	88° / 57°
Hong Kong	Sunny	90° / 79°
Honolulu	Windy	87° / 77°
London	Cloudy	59° / 52°
Los Angeles	Sunny	74° / 55°
Manila	Thunderstorm	88° / 77°
Melbourne	Sunny	82° / 54°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	84° / 79°
New York	Partly Cloudy	90° / 61°
Osaka	Thunderstorm	82° / 73°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	61° / 39°
Busan	Thunderstorm	77° / 70°
Rome	Showers	77° / 61°
Salem	Sunny	95° / 69°
San Francisco	Sunny	66° / 50°
Seoul	Rain	77° / 66°
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	81° / 72°
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	96° / 72°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
5:49 AM	Low Tide	-0.08
1:35 PM	High Tide	1.67
6:43 PM	Low Tide	1.31
10:42 PM	High Tide	1.57

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:20PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3467	3:00AM	6:40AM	Daily up to Oct 7
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA184	11:50PM	5:50AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ702/625	12:05PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3468	7:35PM	1:10AM+1	Daily up to Oct 7
7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

PIC Saipan holds Happy Autumn Festival

Pacific Islands Ckub Saipan is excited to host the "2023 Happy Autumn Festival." This event is in honor of Chuseok (Korea's greatest holiday) and the season of Thanksgiving. It will be an abundance of prolific and thrilling festival with an Autumn theme that Saipan has yet to experience.

The PIC Happy Autumn Festival began on Oct. 1, 2023 and will continue until Nov. 30 2023. Throughout the Autumn Festival local and tourist guests are able to enjoy a variety of exciting activities every Sundays and Thursdays from 1pm to 10pm. Patrons and guests do not want to miss out on the fun-filled activities and awesome games every hour. Delicious snacks will be available for purchase for reasonable prices at the festival's Food Zone. Then, end the night with entertainment with PIC's Autumn Show and Siheky's Autumn Foam Party. In addition to all the fun is the Autumn Happy Farm, where patrons and guests are able to exchange various prizes won when participating in activities and games.

In addition to the PIC Saipan's Happy Autumn Festival is "ChikBeer Night" every Friday from 3pm to 9pm at the Buoy Bar. ChickBeer Night is not the average chicken and beer night. It is driven by the Korean food craze wave, serving various types of Korean-styled chicken from honey garlic, sweet & sour, and original crisp, to bbu-ring-kle chicken, cheesy chicken, and gimbugak chicken. To compliment the delicious chicken flavors is of course the beer. Not a beer drinker, that's absolutely fine, PIC will be serving PopCol (popcorn chicken with cola).

Get rid of the stress and enjoy the moment, join PIC at "Chikbeer Night" every Friday!

Come and experience the Autumn breeze, visit PIC Saipan every Sunday and Thursday!

PIC Saipan's Seaside Grill Happy Hour will only be open every Thursday and Saturday during the Happy Autumn Festival. For more information call PIC Saipan at (670) 234-7976. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Celebrate Korea's "Chuseok" or Autumn Festival and the season of Thanksgiving with live entertainment while chowing down on chicken and beer from Oct. 1 to Nov. 30 at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan's Buoy Bar.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pacific Islands Club Saipan is hosting the 2023 Happy Autumn Festival from Oct. 1 to Nov. 30. Make your way there and celebrate with tons of delicious food and fun activities.

Child care programs just lost thousands of federal dollars

WILLIAMSON, W.Va. (AP)—Kaitlyn Adkins is studying law to help families in her community impacted by the opioid epidemic at the heart of West Virginia coal country.

But to do that, she needs someone to help look after her three toddlers. The first-generation college graduate said she wouldn't be able to finish law school without access to reliable daycare.

Providers say millions of children and their families are now at risk of losing that vital service. After two years of receiving federal subsidies, 220,000 child care programs across the country were cut off from funding Saturday. The largest investment in child care in U.S. history, the monthly payments ranged from hundreds to tens of thousands of dollars, and stabilized the industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It feels like they're just setting everyone up for failure," Adkins said, dropping her 2-year-old and 1-year-old twins at daycare on a recent morning before an hour-and-a-half drive to class.

For years, providers have been raising alarm about an unsustainable business model that burdens families with high costs and leaves centers with razor-thin profit margins—issues only exacerbated by inflation and a significant workforce shortage.

Now, providers say that without additional investment, they face the possibility of shutdown. The Century Foundation, a progressive think tank in Washington, D.C., analyzed a provider survey and government data, and concluded that in six states—Arkansas, Montana, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, as well as Washington, D.C.—up to half of all providers may be forced to close.

Many families and providers are calling on Congress to create a permanent funding solution to the crisis, warning of the ripple effects on the nation's economy. A Democratic proposal failed last month without any Republican support. It would have continued the grants for five years with $16 billion allocated annually.

US announces sweeping action vs Chinese fentanyl supply chain producers

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration took aim Tuesday at the fentanyl trafficking threat, announcing a series of indictments and sanctions against Chinese companies and executives blamed for importing the chemicals used to make the deadly drug.

Officials described the actions, which include charges against eight Chinese companies accused of advertising, manufacturing and distributing precursor chemicals for synthetic opioids like fentanyl, as the latest effort in their fight against the deadliest overdose crisis in U.S. history. The moves come one day before senior administration officials are set to visit Mexico, whose cartels are part of the global trafficking network, for meetings expected to involve discussion of the drug threat.

"We know that this network includes the cartels' leaders, their drug traffickers, their money launderers, their clandestine lab operators, their security forces, their weapons suppliers, and their chemical suppliers," Attorney General Merrick Garland said at a news conference. "And we know that this global fentanyl supply chain, which ends with the deaths of Americans, often starts with chemical companies in China."

Besides charging eight companies, the Justice Department also indicted 12 executives for their alleged roles in drug trafficking. In a coordinated action, the Treasury Department announced sanctions against 28 people and companies—mostly in China but also in Canada—that will cut them off from the U.S. financial system and prohibit anyone in the U.S. from doing business with them. None of those charged has been arrested, but Garland said prosecutors intended to "bring every one of these defendants to justice."

"It's the latest step in the rapid scaling up of our work targeting the financial flows that power the global illicit drug trade," said Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo. He said Treasury is also seeking out the friends, family members, and affiliates of the people who benefit from drug sales.

"If you benefit from the proceeds of this illicit activity, we are going to come after your assets," he said.

Mexico and China are the primary sources for fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances trafficked directly into the U.S., according to the Drug Enforcement Administration, which is tasked with combating illicit drug trafficking. Nearly all the precursor chemicals that are needed to make fentanyl come from China. And the companies that make the precursors routinely use fake return addresses and mislabel the products in order to avoid being caught by law enforcement.

One of the examples cited by the Justice Department involves a Chinese pharmaceutical technology company that advertised xylazine, a horse tranquilizer that is often mixed to fentanyl to ensure a more potent high, and shipped the chemicals to the U.S. and to Mexico. One of the purchasers in Mexico, officials said, was a drug trafficker associated with the Sinaloa Cartel.

This latest action follows a series of measures taken this year against members of the Sinaloa cartel, cash couriers and cartel fraud schemes.

Republicans have complained, however, that the administration isn't doing enough to stop fentanyl and the issue is likely to figure prominently in next year's presidential campaign.

In February, 21 Republican state attorneys general wrote a letter to President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken calling on them to designate Mexican drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations. Last year a group of Republican attorneys general asked the president to declare fentanyl a weapon of mass destruction. No such actions have been taken.

Fentanyl, a powerful opioid, is the deadliest drug in the U.S. today. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that drug overdose deaths have increased more than sevenfold from 2015 to 2021.

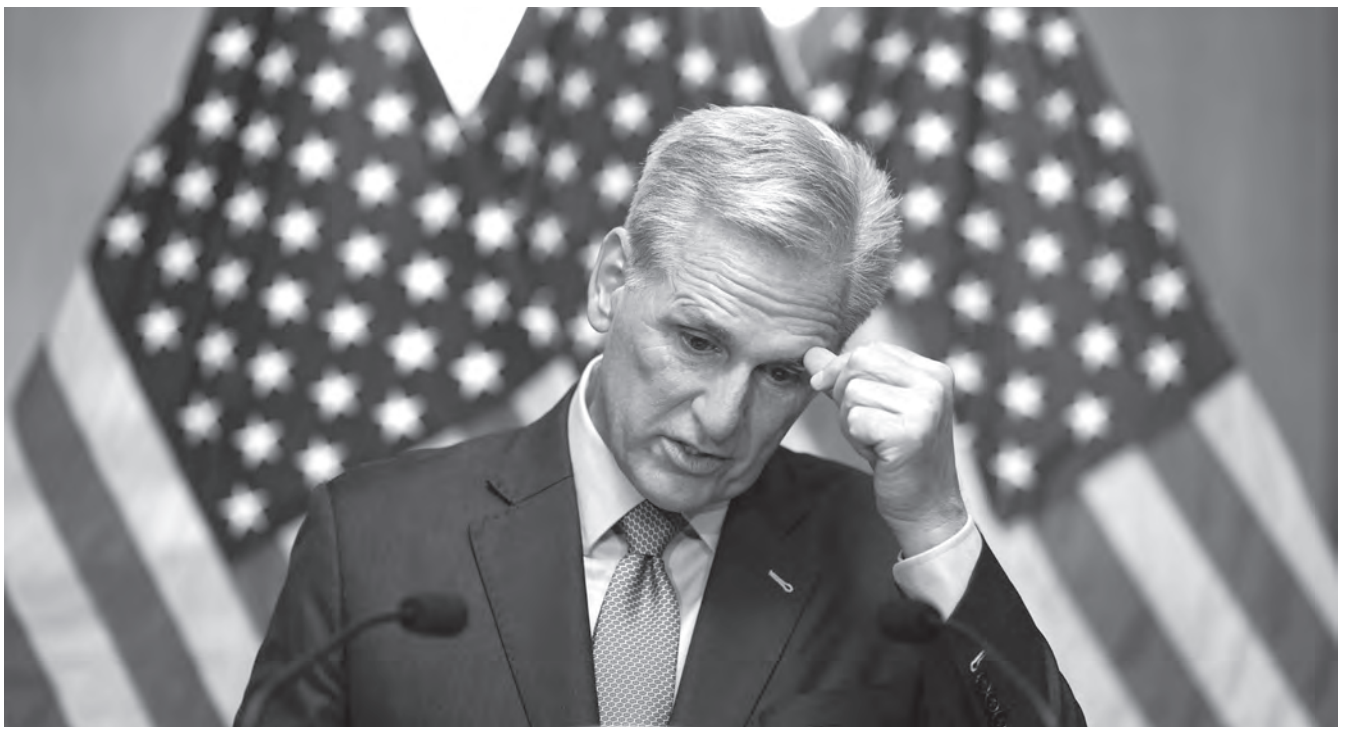
More than 100,000 deaths a year have been linked to drug overdoses since 2020 and about two-thirds of those are related to fentanyl. The death toll is more than 10 times as many drug deaths as in 1988, at the height of the crack epidemic.

The U.S. has taken a slew of actions to stem the tide of fentanyl coming into the country. Overall, the Biden administration has imposed over 200 sanctions related to the illegal drug trade.

Nation

Speaker McCarthy is ousted in historic House vote

» As scramble begins for a Republican leader



AP

Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., speaks to reporters hours after he was ousted as Speaker of the House, Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2023, at the Capitol in Washington.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Speaker Kevin McCarthy was voted out of the job Tuesday in an extraordinary showdown—a first in U.S. history, forced by a contingent of hard-right conservatives and throwing the House and its Republican leadership into chaos.

It's the end of the political line for McCarthy, who has said repeatedly that he never gives up, but found himself with almost no options remaining. Neither the right-flank Republicans who engineered his ouster nor the Democrats who piled on seem open to negotiating.

McCarthy told lawmakers in the evening he would not run again for speaker, putting the gavel up for grabs. Next steps are highly uncertain with no obvious successor to lead the House Republican majority. Action is halted in the House until next week, when Republicans try to elect a new speaker.

"I may have lost this vote today, but as I walk out of this chamber I feel fortunate to have served," McCarthy said at a press conference at the Capitol, alternating between upbeat assessment of his speakership and angry score-settling of those who ousted him.

Still, he said, "I wouldn't change a thing."

McCarthy's chief rival, Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida, orchestrated the rare vote on the obscure "motion to vacate," and pushed ahead swiftly into a dramatic afternoon roll call.

While McCarthy enjoyed support from most Republicans in his slim majority, eight Republican detractors—many of the same hard-right holdouts who tried to stop him from becoming speaker in January—essentially forced him out.

Stillness fell as the presiding officer gaveled the vote closed, 216-210, saying the office of the speaker "is hereby declared vacant."

Moments later, a top McCarthy ally, Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-N.C., took the gavel and, according to House rules, was named speaker pro tempore, to serve in the office until a new speaker is chosen.

The House then briskly recessed as lawmakers met privately to discuss the path forward.

It was a stunning moment for McCarthy, a punishment fueled by growing grievances but sparked by his weekend decision to work with Democrats to keep the federal government open rather than risk a shutdown.

But in many ways, McCarthy's ouster was set in motion when, in deal-making with hard-right holdouts at the start of the year, he agreed to a series of demands—including a rules change that allowed any single lawmaker to file the motion to vacate.

As the House fell silent, Gaetz, a top ally of Donald Trump, rose to offer his motion.

Leaders tried to turn it back, but the vote was 218-208, with 11 Republicans against tabling the motion, a sign of trouble to come.

The House then opened a floor debate unseen in modern times, and Republicans argued publicly among themselves for more than an hour.

"It's a sad day," Republican Rep. Tom Cole of Oklahoma said as debate got underway, urging his colleagues not to plunge the House Republican majority "into chaos."

But Gaetz shot back during the debate, "Chaos is Speaker McCarthy."

As the fiery debate dragged on, many of the complaints against the speaker revolved around his truthfulness and his ability to keep the promises he has made.

Almost alone, Gaetz led his side of the floor debate, criticizing the debt deal McCarthy made with President Joe Biden and the vote to prevent a government shutdown, which conservatives opposed as they demanded steeper spending cuts.

But a long line of McCarthy supporters stood up for him, including Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, a leader of the conservative Freedom Caucus, who said, "He has kept his word." Rep. Garret Graves, R-La., waved his cellphone, saying it was "disgusting" that hard-right colleagues were fundraising off the move in text messages seeking donations.

McCarthy, of California, insisted he would not cut a deal with Democrats to remain in power—not that he could have relied on their help even if he had asked.

Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said in a letter to colleagues that he wants to work with Republicans, but he was unwilling to provide the votes needed to save McCarthy.

Lahaina wants Hawaii governor to delay tourism reopening

HONOLULU (AP)—Residents from fire-stricken Lahaina on Tuesday delivered a petition asking Hawaii Gov. Josh Green to delay plans to reopen a portion of West Maui to tourism starting this weekend, saying the grieving community is not ready to welcome back visitors.

The petition signed by 3,517 people from West Maui zip codes comes amid a fierce and anguished debate over when travelers should return to the region home to the historic town of Lahaina that was destroyed in the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century. At least 98 people died in the Aug. 8 blaze and more than a dozen are missing. The first phase of the plan to reopen Maui to tourists begins Sunday, the two-month anniversary of the disaster.

Though many residents say they are not ready, others say they need tourism so they can work in hotels and restaurants to earn a living.

"We are not mentally nor emotionally ready to welcome and serve our visitors. Not yet," restaurant bartender Pa'ele Kiakona said at a news conference before several dozen people delivered the petition. "Our grief is still fresh and our losses too profound."

Tamara Paltin, who represents Lahaina on the Maui County Council, said two months may seem like a long time, but she noted Lahaina residents didn't have reliable cellphone service or internet for the first month after the fire and have been coping with uncertain housing. She said many people, including herself, can't sleep through the night.

Paltin urged the governor to decide on when to reopen after consulting residents in an "open and transparent way."

Several dozen people dressed in red T-shirts went to Green's koa wood-paneled executive chambers to deliver the signatures in person. Green was not in his office, so his director of constituent services, Bonnelley Pa'uulu, accepted the box on his behalf. Altogether, 14,000 people signed the petition as of midday Tuesday.

Green told the Hawaii News Now interview program "Spotlight Now" shortly afterward that he was "utterly sympathetic" to people's suffering. But he said more than 8,000 people have lost their jobs due to the fire and getting people back to work was part of recovering.

"It's my job as governor to support them, to be thoughtful about all people and to make sure Maui survives, because people will otherwise go bankrupt and have to leave the island, have to move out of Maui," he said. "Local people — these are middle-class people that lived in Lahaina — will have to leave if they don't have jobs."

Maui, which is famous around the world for its beaches and waterfalls, is among the most tourism-dependent islands in Hawaii.

Trump turns fraud trial into campaign stop

NEW YORK (AP)—Donald Trump's court appearances are no longer distractions from his campaign to return to the White House. They are central to it.

The dynamic was on full display this week as the former president and GOP front-runner returned to New York for the opening days of a civil fraud trial accusing him of grossly inflating the value of his businesses.

Trump was under no obligation to appear and did not address the court during public proceedings. But he nonetheless seized the opportunity to create a media spectacle that ensured he was back in the spotlight, eclipsing his rivals. And he once again portrayed himself as a victim of a politicized justice system—a posture that has helped him emerge as the undisputed leader of the 2024 GOP primary.

On Monday, the scene was much like the one that has played out over and over since the spring as Trump has reported to courthouses and a local jail to be processed in four criminal indictments. Once again, reporters waited in line overnight to snag seats in the courtroom; news helicopters tracked his motorcade journey from Trump Tower to the courthouse in lower Manhattan; and cable networks carried the spectacle live on TV.

His appearance Tuesday generated less interest, with empty seats in the courtroom and less television coverage amid a barrage of other news, including the historic and successful effort by a group of hardline Republicans to oust Kevin McCarthy as speaker of the House.

Nonetheless, Trump's presence demonstrated how deftly he has used his legal woes to benefit his campaign. The former president's appearances drew far more attention than any campaign rally would have offered. And it gave Trump a fresh opportunity to rile up his base and gin his fundraising with claims that the cases he faces are nothing more than a coordinated attempt to damage his campaign.

"It's a scam, it's a sham," he said Monday morning. "It's a witch hunt and a disgrace."

Throughout the day came fundraising solicitations tied to the proceedings.

While some rivals had once thought Trump's long list of legal woes might dissuade Republican voters from choosing him as their nominee, his standing in the GOP primary has only improved since before the indictments.

While other politicians might shy away from drawing additional attention to accusations of wrongdoing, Trump took full advantage of the cameras.

He addressed the media assembled outside the courtroom multiple times both Monday and Tuesday, railing against the case and defending himself, turning the banks of cameras into a stand-in jury in his court of public opinion.

"Every lawyer would say, 'Don't talk.' Every candidate would obey the lawyer. Trump just throws out the playbook," said former White House press secretary Ari Fleischer.

Fleischer said that, for Trump, the lines between campaigning and the courtroom have now been erased.

"Every day is a day on the stump, whether it's in Iowa, New Hampshire or in the courtroom," he said, adding, "Every appearance is an opportunity to ring a bell, strike a message, say he's the victim of a weaponized Justice Department and he's the only one who can change Washington."

Asia

ASIAN BRIEFS

N. Korea vows strong response to Pentagon report that calls it 'persistent' threat

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea slammed the United States over a recent Pentagon report that labeled it a "persistent" threat because of weapons of mass destruction, saying Wednesday that it will counter any U.S. aggression or provocations with "the most overwhelming and sustained response strategy." Last week, the Pentagon released the unclassified version of its "2023 Strategy for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction" describing WMD challenges and methods to address them. The report stated that while China and Russia present "the principal WMD challenges," North Korea, Iran and violent extremist organizations remain "persistent regional threats" that must also be addressed. Such U.S. descriptions of North Korea and the North's angry response aren't unusual. But the latest exchange comes as concerns grow that North Korea is pushing for a weapons transfer deal with Russia in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. "The U.S. has just revealed its dangerous intention for aggression to seriously violate the sovereignty and security of (North Korea) and other independent sovereign states by threatening them with WMDs, and realize its wild ambition for seizing global military hegemony," an unidentified spokesperson for North Korea's Defense Ministry said in a statement carried by state media.

North Korea's military will "counter the U.S. imperialist aggressor's military strategy and provocations with the most overwhelming and sustained response strategy," the statement said.

India tells Canada to remove 41 of its 62 diplomats in the country, an official says

TORONTO (AP)—India has told Canada to remove 41 of its 62 diplomats in the country, an official familiar with the matter said Tuesday, ramping up a confrontation between the two countries over Canadian accusations that India may have been involved in the killing of a Sikh separatist leader in suburban Vancouver. The official, who confirmed an earlier report from the Financial Times, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly. India's Ministry of External Affairs declined to comment, but ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi had previously called for a reduction in Canadian diplomats in India, saying they outnumbered India's staffing in Canada. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said last month that there were "credible allegations" of Indian involvement in the slaying of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a 45-year-old Sikh leader who was killed by masked gunmen in June in Surrey, outside Vancouver. For years, India has said Nijjar, a Canadian citizen born in India, has links to terrorism, an allegation Nijjar denied. Arranging the killing of a Canadian citizen in Canada, home to nearly 2 million people of Indian descent, would be unprecedented. On Tuesday, Trudeau didn't confirm the number of diplomats that have been told to leave but suggested Canada would not retaliate. "Obviously, we are going through an extremely challenging time with India right now, but that's why it is so important for us to have diplomats on the ground working with the Indian government and there to support Canadians and Canadian families," Trudeau said. "We're taking this extremely seriously, but we're going to continue to engage responsibly and constructively with the Indian government." Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly said she's in contact with the Indian government. "We will continue to engage privately because we think that diplomatic conversations are best when they remain private," Joly said.

Flights canceled, schools closed as Taiwan braces for Typhoon Koinu

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Flights were canceled and schools were closed in parts of Taiwan on Wednesday as the island braced for strong winds and downpours brought by Typhoon Koinu. At least 93 flights were canceled at airports across the island on Wednesday, according to the Civil Aviation Administration. The Maritime and Port Bureau said 96 ferry trips had been canceled, according to the Central News Agency. The typhoon may make landfall in the southeastern part of Taiwan overnight on Wednesday or Thursday morning, according to meteorologists. On Wednesday, rain from the typhoon's periphery was falling in northern and eastern Taiwan and was expected to become heavier on the eastern coast and in the south later in the day. Taiwan's outlying Penghu, Orchid and Green islands announced school and office closures in anticipation of severe weather brought by the typhoon. Parts of the southern Pingtung county also announced closures. The typhoon was moving west toward Taiwan with maximum sustained winds of 155 kph (96 mph) and gusts of 191 kph (119 mph) on Wednesday morning, according to Taiwan's Weather Bureau. China's National Meteorological Center on Wednesday maintained a yellow alert—the third most severe level—for Typhoon Koinu. Chinese forecasters expected strong winds in the coastal areas of Zhejiang and Fujian provinces, where ferry services were suspended and fishing boats called to port.

3 Filipino fishermen die in South China Sea after boat is hit by passing commercial vessel

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Three Filipino fishermen died in the disputed South China Sea after their boat was accidentally hit by a passing commercial vessel, the Philippine coast guard said Wednesday. The fishermen's boat, F/B Dearyn, was moored in a fishing area in the high seas off the northwestern Philippines when it was hit before dawn on Monday by the passing vessel and capsized, killing its skipper and two crew members. Three other fishermen survived, the coast guard said without elaborating. The three fishermen died due to "possible head trauma" from the collision and their bodies were brought back to shore by the surviving fishermen, a separate police report said. There was no indication that the deadly accident was related to the long-simmering territorial disputes in the busy waterway. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. expressed sadness over the deaths of the fishermen and said a coast guard investigation was underway. "We assure the victims, their families, and everyone that we will exert every effort to hold accountable those who are responsible for this unfortunate maritime incident," Marcos said in a statement. An initial assessment based on the surviving fishermen's account and sea traffic at the time of the accident indicated that a crude oil tanker under the flag of the Marshall Islands may have hit the Filipino fishing boat, the coast guard said in a statement. The Philippine coast guard said it would try to locate the oil tanker and its crew as part of the investigation.

World

Trio wins Nobel Prize in physics

Krausz

L'Huillier

Agostini

STOCKHOLM (AP)—Three scientists won the Nobel Prize in physics on Tuesday for giving us the first split-second glimpse into the superfast world of spinning electrons, a field that could one day lead to better electronics or disease diagnoses.

The award went to French-Swedish physicist Anne L'Huillier, French scientist Pierre Agostini and Hungarian-born Ferenc Krausz for their work with the tiny part of each atom that races around the center and is fundamental to virtually everything: chemistry, physics, our bodies and our gadgets.

Electrons move so fast that they have been out of reach of human efforts to isolate them, but by looking at the tiniest fraction of a second possible, scientists now have a "blurry" glimpse of them and that opens up whole new sciences, experts said.

"The electrons are very fast, and the electrons are really the workforce in everywhere," Nobel Committee member Mats Larsson said. "Once you can control and understand electrons, you have taken a very big step forward."

DEATH & FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

†Antonio Arriola Palacios

July 7, 1950 – September 29, 2023

Lovingly known as "Tan Ton"

In his new life, he now joins his:

Wife: †Maria Terlaje Palacios "Eang"
Parents: †Jose M. & †Lucia A. Palacios
In-Laws: †Jose & †Regina C. Terlaje
†Lantan Su/ †Wenxiu Zheng
†Guocheng Su
Siblings: †Jose A. Palacios
†Alfonso/ †Emilia P. Palacios
†Francisco Pangelinan
†Dolores/ †Joaquin Leon Guerrero
†Vicente C. Terlaje
†Jose C. Terlaje
†Rita/ †Julian Reyes
†Frank Picklesimer
†Antonia Woodworth
†Rosie/ †Mark Pangelinan
†Miguel/ †Pilar Palacios

His memories will forever live in the hearts of his:

Wife: Congxiang Su Palacios
Children: Chengsi Wang
Edward/ Renee Terlaje and family
Anthony Joseph Palacios/
Marla Dela Cruz and family
Marla Nicole/ Dreighton Palacios and family
Reared Daughter: †Soledad (Sol) Terlaje and family
Siblings/ In-laws: Lolita Palacios and Family
Ana/ Francisco Sablan and family
Maria (Mako)/ Estanislao Fujihira and family
Jesus/ Leonora Palacios and Family
Carmen/ Joey Dela Cerna and family
Eleuterio/ Erlinda Palacios and family
Maria L. Terlaje and family
Donald Woodworth and family
Annie Picklesimer and Family
Magdalena/ Mark Hazen and family
Elizabeth Terlaje and family
Yidong Su/ Yongyan Zhao and family
Xiuer Zhang and family

Our beloved †Antonio will also be remembered
by numerous uncles, aunties, nephews, nieces, cousins, and friends.

On October 7, 2023, Funeral Services will be
at San Antonio Church from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Please join us in prayer.
Thank you and Si Yu'us Ma'ase.

From the Family

Environment

Navy issues reprimands for fuel spill that sickened 6K at Pearl Harbor base

HONOLULU (AP)—The Navy last Thursday issued written reprimands to three now-retired military officers for their roles in the spill of jet fuel into Pearl Harbor's drinking water in 2021 but did not fire, suspend, dock the pay or reduce the rank of anyone for the incident.

The spill from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility poisoned thousands of military families and continues to threaten the purity of Honolulu's water supply.

Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro issued censure letters to the three rear admirals, the Navy said in a news release. He also revoked personal military decorations awarded to five rear admirals, three captains and one commander.

"Taking accountability is a step in restoring trust in our relationship with the community," Del Toro said in a statement.

The spill "was not acceptable," and the Navy will continue "to take every action to identify and remedy this issue," he said.

A Navy investigation last year concluded a series of errors caused the fuel to leak into a well that supplied water to housing and offices in and around Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. About 6,000 people suffered nausea, headaches, rashes and other symptoms.

The investigation concluded operator error caused a pipe to rupture when fuel was being transferred between tanks on May 6, 2021, leading 21,000 gallons (80,000 liters) to spill. Most of this liquid flowed into a fire suppression line and sat there for six months, causing the line to sag. A cart then rammed into the drooping line on Nov. 20, releasing 20,000 gallons (75,700 liters) of fuel that entered a French drain and the drinking water well.

The spill came even though the Navy for years reassured Oahu residents their water was safe despite Red Hill's history of leaks, including when 27,000 gallons (102,206 liters) seeped from one tank.

PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS LUKE MCCALL/U.S. NAVY VIA AP, FILE

In this photo provided by the U.S. Navy, Rear Adm. John Korka, commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command, and Chief of Civil Engineers, leads Navy and civilian water quality recovery experts through the tunnels of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, near Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Dec. 23, 2021.

The water poisoning upset people across Hawaii, including veterans, environmentalists, Native Hawaiians, liberals and conservatives.

Wayne Tanaka, director of the Sierra Club of Hawaii, called the reprimands "outrageous" considering the damage done and the ongoing threat the leak poses to an aquifer underneath the tanks.

"Just to have these written slaps on the wrist is insulting to our people, to our dignity," Tanaka said.

After months of resistance, the military agreed to an order from the state of Hawaii to drain the World War II-era tanks. It has spent the past year repairing equipment at the facility to safely remove the fuel beginning next month. It expects to finish by Jan. 19.

Three officers received letters of censure from Del Toro: Retired Rear Adm. Peter Stamatopoulos, who was the commander of Naval Supply Systems Command during the May and November spills; Rear Adm. (retired) John Korka, who was commander of the Navy Facilities Engineering Command Pacific before the two spills; and Rear Adm. (retired) Timothy Kott, who was the commander of Navy Region Hawaii during the November spill.

U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono, a Democrat from Hawaii, said in a statement that true accountability for the disaster would require the Navy to address "systemic command and control failures, and a lack of requisite attention to infrastructure."

She noted the Navy's investigation found that a culture of complacency, a lack of critical thinking, and a lack of timely communication contributed to the spill.

"I have yet to see adequate evidence that Navy leadership is treating these service-wide issues with the seriousness or urgency they demand," Hirono said in a statement.

Hirono, who is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said she would continue pushing the Navy to make these systemic changes.

Emergency rules sought to protect whales from ship collisions

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)—A coalition of environmental groups is calling on the federal government to enact emergency rules to protect a vanishing species of whale from lethal collisions with large ships.

The groups filed their petition with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on Sept. 28 in an effort to protect the North Atlantic right whale. The whale, which can weigh more than five school buses, numbers less than 340 and has been in steep decline in recent years.

Ship collisions are among the most dire threats to the survival of the whale, according to NOAA. The groups cited a proposed rule from the agency designed to prevent such ship strikes by making more vessels slow down for whales. NOAA has yet to release a final updated speed rule despite proposing new rules more than a year ago, the environmental groups said.

The groups argue it's critically important to get new rules on the books before the upcoming calving season, during which the whales migrate hundreds of miles from waters off New England and Canada to their calving grounds off Florida and Georgia.

"Even one ship strike would bring these whales closer to extinction, but speed limits can help prevent that. Federal officials can't sit back and do nothing while right whales are in danger," said Kristen Monsell, oceans legal director at the Center for Biological Diversity, one of the groups that filed the petition.

MICHAEL DWYER

A North Atlantic right whale feeds on the surface of Cape Cod bay off the coast of Plymouth, Mass., March 28, 2018.

NOAA anticipates announcing its final action on the proposed rule this year, said Katie Wagner, a spokesperson for the agency. That could land in the middle of calving season, and include a later date for the regulations to actually go into effect.

The agency is aware of the petition but does not comment on matters related to litigation, Wagner said. The agency is considering expanding "slow zones" off the East Coast, and requiring more vessels to comply with those rules.

NOAA denied a request from environmentalists last year to immediately apply new rules. The agency said at the time via public documents that it was focused on "long-term, substantive vessel strike risk reduction measures." NOAA received more than 90,000 comments on the proposed rule and is using them to inform its final action, Wagner said.

The right whales were once abundant off the East Coast, but they were decimated during the commercial whaling era. They have been protected under the Endangered Species Act for several decades. The whales are also vulnerable to accidental entanglement in commercial fishing gear, and proposed new restrictions to prevent such entanglements have been the subject of a lengthy court battle between the federal government and fishermen.

Montana appealing landmark climate change ruling

HELENA, Mont. (AP)—The office of Montana's Republican attorney general is appealing a landmark climate change ruling that said state agencies aren't doing enough to protect 16 young plaintiffs from harm caused by global warming.

The state filed notice on Friday that it is going to appeal the August ruling by District Court Judge Kathy Seeley, who found the Montana Environmental Policy Act violates the plaintiffs' state constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment. The 1971 law requires state agencies to consider the potential environmental impacts of proposed projects and take public input before issuing permits.

Under a change to that law passed by the 2023 Legislature, the state Department of Environmental Quality does not have to consider the effect of greenhouses gases when issuing permits for fossil fuel projects unless the federal government declares carbon dioxide a regulated pollutant.

The plaintiffs argued they were already feeling the consequences of climate change, with smoke from worsening wildfires choking the air they breathe and drought drying rivers that sustain agriculture, fish, wildlife and recreation. The state argued that the volume of greenhouse gasses released from Montana fossil fuel projects was insignificant compared to the world's emissions.

Seeley's ruling, which followed a first-of-its-kind trial in the U.S. in June, added to a small number of legal decisions around the world that have established a government duty to protect citizens from climate change. Last week in France, the European Court of Human Rights heard arguments from six young Portuguese people and their lawyers who said 32 European governments were violating their human rights by failing to address climate change.

It will likely be several months before the state of Montana files its brief laying out its appeal of Seeley's ruling, Bowen Greenwood, clerk of the Montana Supreme Court, said Monday.

In the meantime, the state Department of Environmental Quality is asking Montana residents to weigh in on potential updates to the Montana Environmental Policy Act, or MEPA. The administrative rules to implement the law were passed in the 1980s.

"These regulations are showing their age and it's time to hear from Montanans about what MEPA should look like today and into the future," Chris Dorrington, director of the DEQ, said in a statement.

Montanans are being asked what changes, if any, are needed to modernize the regulations and how greenhouse gas emissions and climate change should be analyzed. At least three public hearings are scheduled this month, including one in Billings on Monday night. The DEQ is also taking public comment online through the end of the year.

The issue is being considered now, Dorrington said, in part because of the successful legal challenge by Montana youth.

"We want to start a thoughtful dialogue about greenhouse gas emissions and other topics, and we are seeking input that is balanced and driven by sound science," he said.

Life & Style

David Beckham reflects on his soccer career in Netflix doc

AP

Inter Miami co-owner David Beckham gives the thumbs up before a Leagues Cup soccer match Adam Grinwis, Wednesday, Aug. 2, 2023, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

LOS ANGELES (AP)— Late-night talk shows began their return to the air after a five-month absence brought on by the Hollywood writers strike, while actors completed the first day of talks that could end their own long work walk-off.

CBS's " The Late Show With Stephen Colbert," ABC's " Jimmy Kimmel Live! " and NBC's " The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon " were the first shows to leave the air when the writers strike began on May 2, and now are among the first to return with airings Monday night.

Colbert blew a leaping kiss to his audience, which chanted his name as he took the stage at the Ed Sullivan Theater in New York for the early evening taping of his show that airs at 11:35 p.m. Eastern.

"It feels good to be back," the host said. "Now the writers strike is over with a new contract that includes protections against AI, cost of living increases, better pay for streaming, plus, thanks to the picket lines, my writers got fresh air and sunshine, and they do not care for that. Now they're back safely in their joke holes."

He lamented having been unable to weigh in with jokes about so much news for so many months.

"I believe we have been off the air for 154 indictments," he said. "It was a crazy summer to be off. It was just packed with events."

Meanwhile, the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists began negotiations Monday with the same group, the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, for the first time since they joined writers in a historic dual strike on July 14. The two sides will resume talks Wednesday.

Comedian John Oliver got his first take on the strike out on Sunday night, exuberantly returning to his "Last Week Tonight" show on HBO and delivering full-throated support for the strike.

Oliver cheerily delivered a recap of stories from the last five months before turnings serious, calling the strike "an immensely difficult time" for all those in the industry.

"To be clear, this strike happened for good reasons. Our industry has seen its workers severely squeezed in recent years," Oliver said. "So, the writers guild went to strike and thankfully won. But, it took a lot of sacrifices from a lot of people to achieve that."

Warner Bros. Discovery, which owns HBO, is among the studios on the other side of the table in the writers and actors strikes, and its CEO, David Zaslav, has been directly involved in negotiations.

Colbert will have Astrophysicist and author Neil deGrasse Tyson on his first show back. Kimmel will host Arnold Schwarzenegger. Matthew McConaughey will be on Fallon's couch.

The hosts haven't been entirely idle. They teamed up for a podcast, " Strike Force Five," during the strike.

The writers were allowed to return to work last week after the Writers Guild of America reached an agreement on a three-year contract with an alliance of the industry's biggest studios, streaming services and production companies.

Union leaders touted the deal as a clear win on issues including pay, size of staffs and the use of artificial intelligence that made the months off worth it. The writers themselves will vote on the contract in a week of balloting that began Monday.

Actors walked off the job over many of the same issues as writers, and SAG-AFTRA leaders said they would look closely at the gains and compromises of the WGA's deal, but emphasized that their demands would remain the same as they were when the strike began.

In a message emailed to members and posted on social media, the union's leadership said not to treat a resolution as a foregone conclusion.

"As we negotiate, we ask that you not let up," the message said. "Keep turning out in full force on our picket lines and at solidarity events around the country. Let the AMPTP hear your voice loud and clear. It makes a difference."

The two sides said in a joint statement that "several executives" from studios would be in on the talks, without providing names. But along with Zaslav, Disney CEO Bob Iger, Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos and NBCUniversal Studio Group Chief Content Officer Donna Langley all took part directly in the negotiations with writers.

It was just five days after writers and studios resumed talks that a deal was reach and that strike ended, though an attempt to restart negotiations a month earlier broke off after a few meetings.

The late-night shows will have significant limits on their guest lists. Their bread and butter, actors appearing to promote projects, will not be allowed to appear if the movies and shows are for studios that are the subject of the strikes.

But exceptions abound. McConaughey, for example, is appearing with Fallon to promote his children's book, "Just Because."

And SAG-AFTRA has granted interim agreements allowing actors to work on many productions, and with that comes the right of actors to publicly promote them.

Father feels helpless as marriage crumbles

DEAR ABBY: I have failed in a 30-year relationship and as a father of five. After feeling terrible for a number of years, I was finally diagnosed with a blood disorder. I was prescribed a chemotherapy pill and, two years later, was diagnosed with extreme neuropathy. Depression set in. I let myself go and rarely got out of bed. My wife complained because she wanted me to be more involved with the children, but I failed.

We are now going through a divorce. I have been cut off from my 13-year-old son, and I don't know how to reconnect. He's the youngest of my kids, and he's very special to me because he is adopted, as was I. I need help. I'm not good at asserting myself. Please help me because my heart is broken.

NEEDS HELP IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR NEEDS HELP: The individuals who can provide the help you are looking for would be your divorce lawyer and a licensed mental health professional. The former will see to it that your legal rights as a parent are enforced; the latter can help you become more assertive as well as, hopefully, reconnect with your youngest child. Your heart may be broken, but it will heal more quickly if you start now.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Out of nowhere, my husband announced he thinks we should unfriend each other on Facebook. I got upset and told him it would make me feel insecure about us, because I think there is no reason for it. I find it very suspicious, and if there is a reason, I think we should split up. He unfriended me anyway. He called me closed-minded and said I value Facebook over our marriage. Is he right?

SOCIAL MEDIA-MINDED IN GEORGIA

DEAR S.M.M.: No, he's not right. Your husband's announcement was a red flag. When a spouse does what your husband has done, it's usually because he doesn't want his partner to see what he is posting and doesn't want to be monitored.

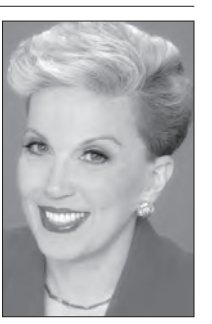
You need to discuss this further so he can explain his reasons. If the discussion is not productive, offer your husband the option of counseling with a licensed marriage and family therapist. If he refuses, consult an attorney so your interests will be protected.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Our church has a potluck every Saturday. How do we deal with the freeloaders—an adult family of three—who never bring anything? They jump up to be first in line, don't help clean up and never fail to take leftovers home with them. They act like they deserve free meals. We are a small church and could use an extra dish, help in cleaning up, etc. Thank you for your advice.

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

OUTRAGED IN OREGON

DEAR OUTRAGED: "Someone"—preferably, but not necessarily, the religious leader of your church—should take the family aside privately and explain the "rules" to them. It may not happen until the rest of you complain about what's going on. If that family cannot afford to bring a dish, the least they could do is assist with cleaning up.

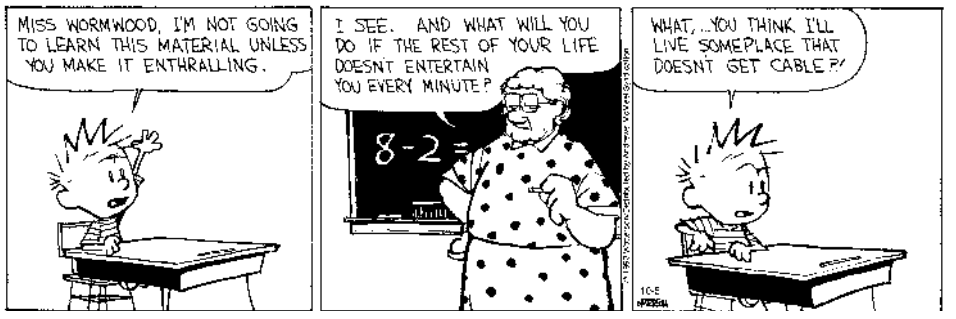
■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


MISS WORMWOOD, I'M NOT GOING TO LEARN THIS MATERIAL UNLESS YOU MAKE IT ENTHRALLING.
I SEE. AND WHAT WILL YOU DO IF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE DOESN'T ENTERTAIN YOU EVERY MINUTE?
8-2=
WHAT, ..YOU THINK I'LL LIVE SOMEPLACE THAT DOESN'T GET CABLE?!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

I SEE YOU.
HUH?
I SEE WHAT YOU'RE DOING. BEING ANNOYING. TRYING TO DRIVE ME CRAZY.
KATY, I'M LITERALLY JUST SITTING HERE. BREATHING.
EXACTLY.
YOU HAVE YEARS TILL YOU'RE A MOODY TEENAGER. PACE YOURSELF.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Apple desktop
5 Group of seals
8 Fed. workplace monitor
12 Japanese noodles
13 Three, on a sundial
14 Tavern order
15 Gumbo or bisque, e.g.
16 Right angle
17 Pet food brand
18 Gallery star
20 Flock females
22 KC Wolf, to the Kansas City Chiefs
26 Auto style
29 Type measures
30 "Selma" director DuVernay
31 Follow
32 Airport screening org.
33 Raced
34 Computer key
35 Tank filler
36 Equals
37 Camaraderie
40 Bartlett, for one
41 Intolerant sorts
45 Dweeb
47 Lennon's love
49 Wash
50 Kazan of filmdom
51 Quirky
52 Daring Knievel
53 Sweater material
54 Astronaut Jemison
55 Feudal worker

DOWN

1 Actress Rae
2 Heath
3 Border on
4 Star on a map
5 Vatican masterpiece
6 Black gold
7 Pickle
8 Theater awards
9 Maritime painting
10 Dress edge
11 "— Poetica"
19 D.C. bigwig
21 Existed
23 Soccer star from Argentina
24 Done with
25 Tiny amounts
26 Undo a dele
27 Lighten
28 "Titanic" star Leonardo
32 Watering hole
33 Avoids a trial
35 Fed. office supplier
36 Zadora of "Hairspray"
38 Military award
39 — Island
42 Roof overhang
43 Winnebago owner, briefly
44 Ego
45 Just out
46 "Evil Woman" band
48 Secret-protecting doc.

Solution time: 24 mins.

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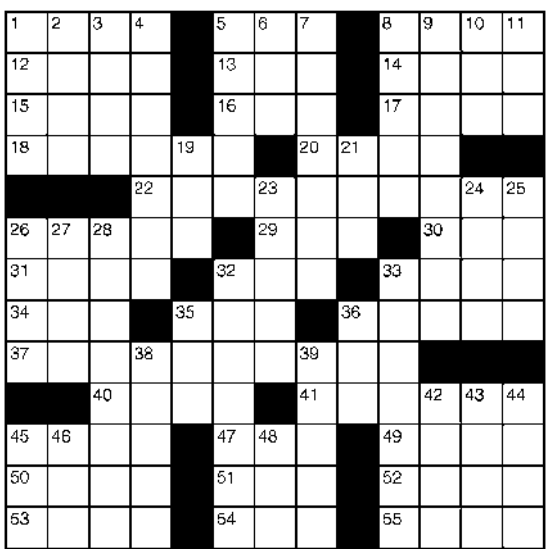
Yesterday's answer 10-5



STUMPED? For answers lo today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18÷ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jesse Eisenberg, 40; Scott Weinger, 48; Kate Winslet, 48; Guy Pearce, 56.

Happy Birthday: Take whatever comes your way in stride, and you'll find a way to turn it into something you can use to your advantage. Let your charm and sensitivity toward others help you gain trust. If you reach out and help others, you'll find a way to parlay what you do into something beneficial. Be true to yourself and include others; you'll gain the respect, input and help you need. Your numbers are 5, 11, 22, 24, 31, 35, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Stay calm, relax and refuse to get all worked up over nothing. Concentrate on what you want, and use your skills and talents well. Let what you accomplish turn into your calling card, not what you say you are going to pursue. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Organize everything and present your best offer. Communicate with people who can offer sound advice or participate in your venture. Don't take risks that can jeopardize your health, investments or friendships. Focus on adjustments that are within your means. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Follow your intuition and do what makes you happy. Engage in events conducive to networking, and find a way to win over a crowd. Honesty is critical. If you hide your identity or agenda, your effort will be in vain. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Question every move you make before you proceed. How others respond will be indicative of what's to come. Emotions will surface if you disappoint those close to you. Search for something that makes a difference or helps a cause that concerns you. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Don't feel pressured to act if you aren't prepared. Do your research, talk to experts and set a budget to help you reach your goal on time. A physical challenge will boost your confidence and prepare you for new beginnings. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Open your mind to new information, then determine what's useable. Take charge of your life, and structure your move forward based on your needs. A change will motivate you to incorporate the things you enjoy doing most into your everyday routine. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Emotions will surface. Get what you want to share out in the open. Express your concerns and desires to those you think can help you make a difference. Anger isn't the answer, but a well-thought-out plan will attract sufficient backup. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Take better care of your reputation and health. Set boundaries and take the initiative to control any changes you face. It's up to you to point yourself in a suitable direction. Prepare to let go of what is no longer working for you. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Keep your emotions out of life decisions that could influence educational pursuits and job prospects. You'll be given false information or led astray by a master of manipulation. Be smart; don't let anyone take advantage of you. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Make changes at home that will help you avoid turmoil. Someone is likely to use emotional manipulation to upset your world. Look for a unique way to stabilize your life and position and prevent interference. Say no to over-the-top suggestions. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Stop, think and assess what others expect of you. Address what you aren't willing to put up with and focus on what helps you get ahead and save money. Someone will push emotional buttons; don't take the bait. Put your energy where it counts. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Change how you handle your money, job prospects and domestic affairs. An aggressive move on your part will unnerve someone who likes to interfere. Make your position clear, then follow through with your plans. Health and fitness will ease anxiety and stress. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are intelligent, emotional and active. You are resourceful and extraordinary.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		1						
4		7	9	3	5	2		
9				1	4	5	3	7
7			4		1	9	8	
	4	9	3			1		
		6			9	3		2
		5				7		4
	7			5	3		2	
			1	4	7			3

Difficulty: ★★★ 10/5

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

5	4	9	7	1	3	6	8	2
1	6	3	4	8	2	9	7	5
8	2	7	9	5	6	3	4	1
3	5	2	1	9	4	8	6	7
6	8	4	5	3	7	2	1	9
9	7	1	6	2	8	4	5	3
4	9	6	3	7	5	1	2	8
7	1	8	2	6	9	5	3	4
2	3	5	8	4	1	7	9	6

Difficulty: ★★★ 10/4

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

A VISIT TO YUKON Solution: 7 letters

R	N	I	L	S	E	T	S	K	C	A	M	R	A	C
O	O	T	S	Y	T	I	C	N	O	S	W	A	D	A
U	I	O	A	L	A	N	D	S	C	A	P	E	R	R
T	T	O	D	K	A	D	A	N	A	C	I	C	E	C
E	C	K	G	T	H	N	O	O	L	V	T	A	I	R
E	N	L	L	R	U	I	D	V	E	I	T	R	N	O
K	U	I	A	A	E	O	N	S	C	E	M	I	D	S
A	J	H	C	I	K	L	R	I	R	U	T	B	E	S
L	S	C	I	L	I	O	E	R	S	A	A	O	E	T
N	E	O	E	A	H	V	I	E	O	I	V	U	R	H
O	N	L	R	E	F	T	U	G	P	E	X	E	K	I
S	I	D	T	A	O	M	O	O	S	E	L	N	N	S
T	A	I	R	R	H	S	U	R	D	L	O	G	Y	T
A	H	O	Y	A	M	A	C	B	R	I	D	E	A	L
W	I	L	D	E	R	N	E	S	S	P	R	U	C	E

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Arctic, Canada, Carcross, Caribou, Carmacks, Chilkoot, Cold, Dawson City, Eagle, Faro, Glacier, Goat, Gold Rush, Haines Junction, Hike, Island, Landscape, Liard, Loon, Lynx, MacBride, Mayo, Moose, Museum, Outdoor, Peel, Raven, Reindeer, Route, Spruce, Takhini, Territory, Teslin, Thistle, Trail, Watson Lake, Whitehorse, Wilderness

Yesterday's Answer: Abroad

The NEW **Treasury 54** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-856-232-2367)

Wheeler, Castellanos help Phillies beat Marlins in NL Wild Card Series opener

AP

Philadelphia Phillies' Bryson Stott, left, Johan Rojas and Nick Castellanos celebrate after the Phillies won Game 1 in an NL wild-card baseball playoff series against the Miami Marlins, Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2023, in Philadelphia.

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Flip that finger, Nick.

The ring one, of course. Nick Castellanos had no desire to turn his moment on second base into a NSFW moment in the postseason.

The All-Star slugger did—with millions briefly confusing the gesture for the obscene finger—direct his ring finger toward a joyous Phillies dugout, sending a message that the defending NL champions are chasing the World Series ring they were denied by Houston last year.

"That's why we're playing this month," Castellanos said.

Zack Wheeler struck out eight in a sensational effort, José Alvarado preserved the lead with a pivotal strikeout and Philadelphia opened a resolute postseason push with a 4-1 win over the Miami Marlins in the opener of their NL Wild Card Series on Tuesday night.

"As soon as I stepped foot out of the dugout to go stretch out there in the bullpen, the crowd went nuts and I got chills," Wheeler said.

Wheeler quickly started dealing and got the run support needed to put the Marlins on the ropes.

Led by Kyle Schwarber's 47 homers, the Phillies had six players in the Game 1 lineup with at least 20. But they didn't need the Schwarbombs and Alec Booms to get the job done, as every starter had at least one hit, without a home run.

Castellanos added an RBI double in the eighth inning to score Bryce Harper—who knocked off his helmet as he steamrolled past a stop sign—and the Phillies moved within a victory of an NL Division Series matchup against Atlanta.

"Bryce does that all the time and he's miraculously safe more often than not," Castellanos said with a laugh.

Wheeler allowed one run in 6 2/3 innings. Craig Kimbrel worked a scoreless ninth for the save.

Phillies fans held signs that read "Un-phinished Business" and they were downright delirious when injured slugger Rhys Hoskins fought back tears and threw the ceremonial first pitch.

Castellanos did, too. He wore Hoskins' No. 17 on the side of his cap this season in tribute to the first baseman who spiked his bat on a home run last season in an NLDS victory.

"He symbolizes Philadelphia, honestly more than any of the signees that have come here after the fact," Castellanos said.

The Phillies won 11 postseason games last season, two shy of the ultimate goal and their first World Series title since 2008. The theme of unfinished business—as it is for so many World Series losers—was a key element that permeated throughout the clubhouse this season.

"We've got to get back after it this year, and it's a different team," manager Rob Thomson said. "I believe it's a better team, to be honest with you."

Here they are again, this time with star shortstop Trea Turner, playing big games in October—and with Wheeler in top form.

Wheeler, on the short list of great free-agent signings in team history, brought the heat from the start. He threw nine fastballs in the 97-99 mph range in the first inning, the hardest a pitcher who struck out 212 batters has thrown all season.

The veteran right-hander never backed down as 45,662 fans at Citizens Bank Park roared on every K.

Wheeler's slider, nasty. His sinker, filthy.

Wheeler is simply grateful for another postseason shot a year after he was lifted with a 1-0 lead in the sixth inning of Game 6 in the World Series against Houston. Yordan Alvarez hit a three-run homer off Alvarado later in the inning and the Astros soon clinched the World Series.

That was last season.

This time, Wheeler took a two-hit shutout into the seventh and was pulled after allowing consecutive infield singles with two outs, the second one by Bryan De La Cruz driving in Miami's only run.

Alvarado struck out pinch-hitter Yuli Gurriel with two runners aboard to protect a 3-1 lead. The left-hander retired two batters in the eighth, and Jeff Hoffman got the third out of the inning.

The Marlins finished with seven hits.

"I think they know what's at stake," manager Skip Schumaker said. "They know what tomorrow means. We're going to do the same thing we've always done."

Wheeler threw only 46 pitches through four innings—while Marlins starter Jesús Luzardo labored through 90 over the same span.

The 26-year-old Luzardo was raised in South Florida and grew up rooting for Marlins stars such as Juan Pierre and Miguel Cabrera.

Luzardo was 6 years old when he attended Game 3 of the 2003 World Series, won by the Marlins, and was thrilled when he was traded to Miami ahead of the 2021 season.

His first postseason start for his childhood team hardly went as planned.

Johan Rojas, the No. 9 hitter, hammered away at Luzardo with a nine-pitch at-bat for a single that opened the third. He scored on Alec Bohm's RBI double to left field.

Luzardo gave up run-scoring singles to Bryson Stott and Cristian Pache that made it 3-0 in the third.

"We've just got to keep this going," Harper said. "Leave no doubt."

Hoskins choked back tears, patted his chest in appreciation and even waved a rally towel before he threw the first pitch. The slugging first baseman has not played this season after he suffered a torn ACL in his left knee. The 30-year-old Hoskins—playing on a $12 million, one-year contract—might have made his last appearance at Citizens Bank Park.

Hoskins said he will head to Florida on Wednesday to face live pitching with hopes he could return to the Phillies if they make the World Series.

"As much as I want to be here, this is part of the way that I get a chance to be on the field with these guys again," Hoskins said. "I've got to do everything I can to give myself that opportunity."

Former Phillies manager Charlie Manuel posted a picture on social media of him watching the game from a hospital room. Manuel led the Phillies to the 2008 World Series title. He suffered a stroke in September.

DIAMONDBACKS 6, BREWERS 3

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Corbin Carroll and the Arizona Diamondbacks are one resilient bunch. Staring at an early deficit against Corbin Burnes, they slugged their way to the front of their NL Wild Card Series.

Carroll and Ketel Marte homered on back-to-back pitches and Gabriel Moreno also went deep, sending the Diamondbacks to a 6-3 victory over the Milwaukee Brewers on Tuesday night in the opener of their best-of-three series.

Arizona is making the franchise's first playoff appearance since 2017, and it had been 0-14 in postseason games when trailing by at least three runs. But this is a tested group of Diamondbacks who had to push all the way to the final days of the season to secure an NL wild card.

So that 3-0 hole with Burnes on the mound for the Brewers was just another challenge that had to be overcome.

"He is a really good pitcher," said Carroll, who added another memorable performance to his breakout rookie season. "We wanted to get him out of there. I thought we took really patient at-bats and got rewarded with that patience by getting some balls in the middle of the plate that we were able to put some good swings on."

The rally put Arizona in a prime position to advance. Game 2 is Wednesday, and the Diamondbacks have All-Star Zac Gallen and Merrill Kelly lined up after rookie Brandon Pfaadt lasted just 2 2/3 innings in the opener.

Arizona's comeback began when Carroll followed Geraldo Perdomo's one-out single in the third with a 444-foot drive into the second deck of the stands in right-center. On Burnes' next pitch, Marte sent a cutter over the right-field wall to tie the game.

Moreno put the Diamondbacks in front by homering for the first time since Sept. 2. Moreno's 425-foot shot in the fourth came on a 2-2 slider.

Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo felt Carroll's homer was a turning point.

"I think at that point, we all exhaled," Lovullo said, "and I think we collectively got our feet underneath us and felt very good about the direction in which we were going."

Third baseman Evan Longoria protected Arizona's 4-3 lead in the fifth by robbing Tyrone Taylor of a bases-loaded hit and turning it into an inning-ending double play. Christian Walker provided some insurance with a two-run double off Devin Williams in the ninth.

Taylor hit a two-run homer for Milwaukee. The NL Central champion Brewers left the bases loaded in the first and third, and they failed to score after loading the bases with nobody out in the fifth.

TWINS 3, BLUE JAYS 1

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Royce Lewis homered in each of his first two at-bats, and the Twins stopped an 18-game postseason losing streak by topping the Blue Jays in the opener of their AL Wild Card Series.

Lewis hit a two-run shot off Kevin Gausman in the first inning and a leadoff drive in the third, sending the home dugout and the sellout Target Field crowd into a frenzy.

The bigger celebration occurred a few hours later when Jhoan Duran pitched a hitless ninth to close the first victory in the playoffs for the Twins since Oct. 5, 2004.

Pablo López (1-0) also delivered for Minnesota, permitting one run and five hits in 5 2/3 innings.

Gausman (0-1) surrendered three runs and three hits in four innings. The Blue Jays got on the board when Kevin Kiermaier's two-out single drove in Bo Bichette in the sixth, but they left nine runners on base.

RANGERS 4, RAYS 0

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Jordan Montgomery scattered six hits over seven innings, helping the Rangers beat the sloppy Rays in their AL Wild Card Series opener.

Corey Seager and Josh Jung drove in runs and the Rangers benefitted from four errors by the Rays, who also fizzled offensively before a crowd of just 19,704—roughly 5,300 below listed capacity—at Tropicana Field.

Texas moved within a victory of a AL Division Series matchup against Baltimore.

Tampa Bay, wearing throwback Devil Rays jerseys in the style of 1998-2000, lost its sixth straight postseason game since winning its 2021 Division Series opener against Boston.

Montgomery (1-0), a 30-year-old left-hander acquired from St. Louis at the trade deadline, struck out five and walked none.

Tampa Bay right-hander Tyler Glasnow (0-1) was charged with four runs, three earned, and six hits in five-plus innings. He struck out eight and walked five.

Nuggets gear up for title defense, guard vs complacency

DENVER (AP)—Nikola Jokic couldn't take his gaze off the NBA championship trophy sitting next to his arm.

The Denver Nuggets big man stared and stared at the list of teams engraved on the shiny gold prize, before something suddenly hit him.

"They didn't put our name on here," he said Monday at media day.

Actually, it was—on the very front, where Jokic couldn't quite see.

What the two-time NBA MVP and the Nuggets can see quite clearly is a path toward repeating, despite losing veteran leader/sixth-man Bruce Brown through free agency.

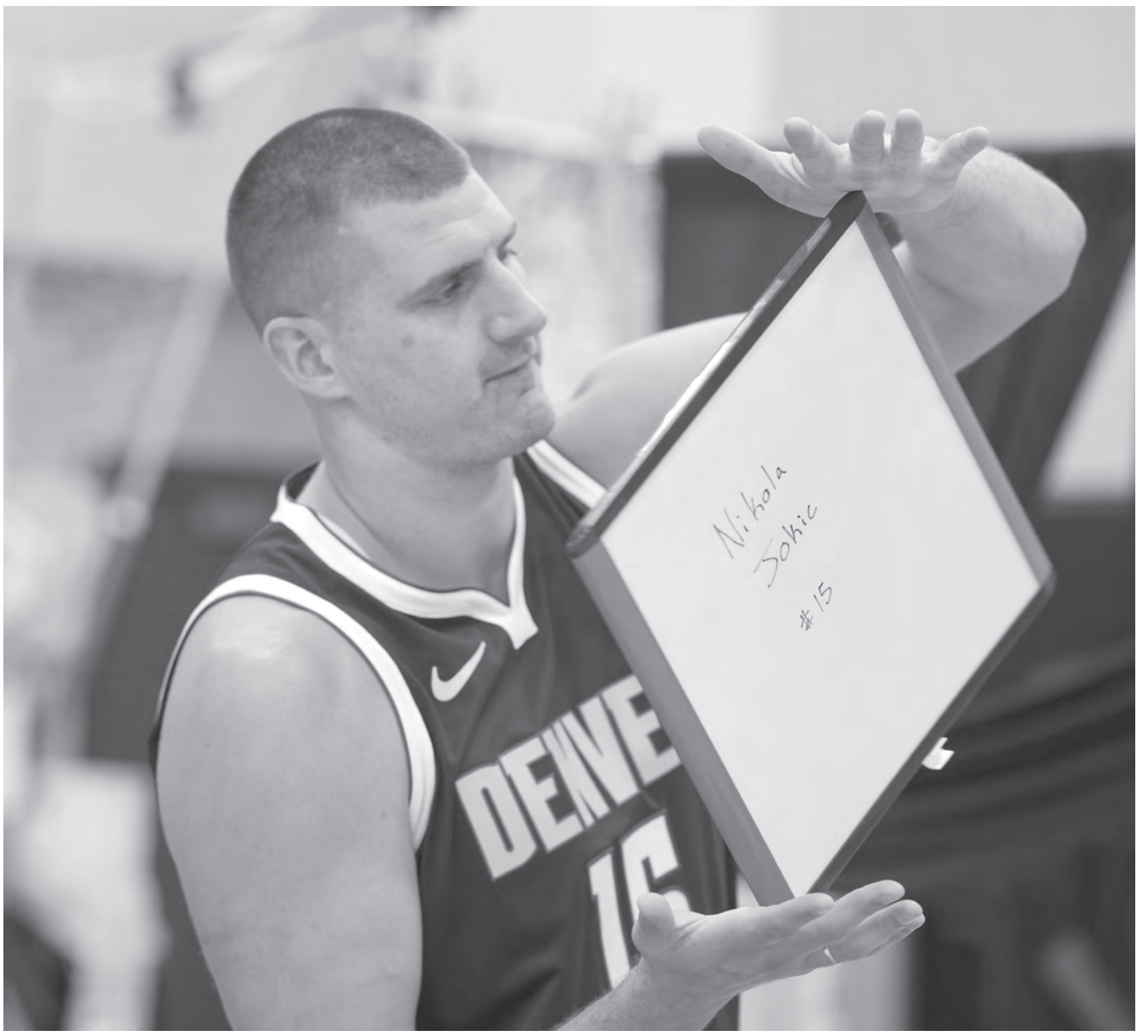
That's provided, of course, they can guard against one thing—complacency.

"No one cares what you did last season," said Nuggets coach Michael Malone, whose team beat Miami in five games to win the NBA title. "We had success in that moment. But that moment is gone. We have a new opportunity and challenge in front of us."

The Nuggets certainly enjoyed the summer after winning the franchise's first NBA crown. There were parades and parties before scattering for the offseason.

Jokic headed back to Sombor, Serbia, where he did a little bit of everything. He was spotted doing flips into a river off a rubber raft, dancing at a party with family and friends, hanging out with Aaron Gordon who paid him a visit and watching his beloved horses race.

Any chance to touch a basketball?



AP

Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic spins a board with his name on it for identification purposes during the NBA basketball team's media day on Monday, Oct. 2, 2023, in Denver.

"A couple times," Jokic said. "Not much."

"No, he didn't," point guard Jamal Murray playfully chided.

The team simply trusts Jokic to be his triple-double self come the season. He averaged 30 points, 13.5 rebounds and 9.5 assists in the postseason on his way to winning the Finals MVP. It more than made up for the fact he lost out to Philly's Joel Embiid in his bid to win a third straight NBA MVP.

"I never tell Nikola to go home and work on a lefty jump hook," Malone said. "The greatest challenge for Nikola is to continue to find ways to be a leader and to be more vocal."

Just before camps opened, the NBA saw the landscape dramatically change with some big names being traded. Damian Lillard is now with Milwaukee and Jrue Holiday wound up with Boston. Holiday's older brother, Justin, plays for the Nuggets and said their dad sent a message on the family's text chain.

"Something like, 'I'm excited for you. Congrats. You all are going to get a championship,'" Justin Holiday recounted with a laugh. "I'm like, 'Hold on.' I mean, I'm excited for him, but ..."

The Nuggets have a void to fill with the departure of Brown, who signed a two-year, $45-million deal with the Indiana Pacers. Christian Braun will see a bump in minutes after his dependable play last season as a rookie. So, too, will veteran guard Reggie Jackson. The team also lost the leadership of Jeff Green and Ish Smith.

"I think right now a lot of teams view the league, quite frankly, as wide open," general manager Calvin Booth said. "We're going to be hunted — can we still have a hunter's mindset?"

Murray definitely believes so. So does Michael Porter Jr., who pointed out that Denver won even with Murray (knee) and Porter (back) pretty much rehabbing throughout last season.

"To have this summer to make some steps has been amazing," Porter said.

Murray raised his game in the postseason, averaging 26.1 points and 7.1 assists.

Next step, carry it through an entire season and earn accolades such as All-Star, which Malone fully believes Murray can.

It would be nice and all, but reaching All-Star status is down on his priority list.

"I'd rather be a champion," Murray said. "A lot of guys are All-Stars, but not champions."

Josh Kroenke, the president/governor of the Nuggets, has recently seen how difficult it is to win back-to-back titles. One of his other teams, the NHL's Colorado Avalanche, won the Stanley Cup in 2022 but was eliminated in the first-round last season.

His advice?

"Not to allow complacency to set in," Kroenke said. "When you achieve the ultimate goal, your natural reaction is to ... relax a little bit. We don't have the exact same rosters we did last year. We have the same starting five, which we feel is the best in the NBA."

Kroenke said the team is exploring all avenues to remedy the fact that many Nuggets and Avalanche fans can't watch their teams on local television.

In 2019, the region's biggest cable operator, Comcast, stopped carrying Altitude due to a disagreement over fees the cable giant was charging to carry the network. The ensuing legal battle has kept the Nuggets off the local airwaves in millions of homes for the last four seasons.

"I can assure you that we're doing all we can," Kroenke said. "We want the best for the fans to see their teams."

LeBron returns for 21st NBA season with relief for Bronny, excitement for Lakers

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. (AP)—LeBron James is dedicating his 21st NBA season to his son, and Bronny James' encouraging recovery from sudden cardiac arrest is foremost in his mind while the top scorer in NBA history gets back to work this week.

"Nothing else matters besides my family," James said.

But LeBron is also thinking about adding another championship to his collection, and he believes the Los Angeles Lakers have the talent to grab it.

Bronny James is progressing in his rehabilitation from cardiac arrest in hopes of playing for the University of Southern California this season, James said Monday when the Lakers held their annual media day ahead of training camp. James was clearly encouraged by the progress made by his 18-year-old son, who went into cardiac arrest during a workout at the Galen Center in late July.

"Bronny is doing extremely well," James said. "He has begun his rehab process to get back on the floor this season with his teammates at USC. (With) the successful surgery that he had, he's on the up-and-up. It's definitely a whirlwind, a lot of emotions for our family this summer. But the best thing we have is each other."

LeBron praised USC's training staff and coaches for saving Bronny's life with their quick responses after Bronny was stricken. Bronny is attending classes at USC and spending time with his teammates while he gets back to full strength.

LeBron said the health scare was frightening for the family, but ultimately made them stronger.

"We stuck by each other," James said. "We gave Bronny strength throughout the whole process. We're happy to see where he is today, and we look forward to seeing what his future still has in store for him."

The drama also played a part in James' decision that he was both willing and eager to continue his NBA career. James spoke openly about the possibility of walking away from the game last spring after the Lakers were swept in the Western Conference finals by eventual NBA champion Denver.

"I feel like I've got a lot more in the tank to give," James said. "At that moment, I didn't. I was exhausted. I was tired. Mentally, I was in 20 different places. ... But I'm happy to be returning for another season and helping to lead this team to the promised land. That's just the goal."

James has peace of mind about his family and a renewed determination to work, but he also has improved health. He missed a month of the regular season shortly after he broke Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's scoring record due to right foot soreness, and he wasn't at full strength down the stretch or in the postseason.

James essentially confirmed Monday that he badly injured his tendon, but he apparently didn't have offseason surgery to repair it.

"A lot of my attention this summer was with my foot and getting that back to pre-injury, pre-Dallas game," James said. "I pretty much tore the whole tendon on my right foot, so this summer has been a lot of rehabbing that and getting that back to where it needs to be. So far it's been reacting really well in the offseason workout. I look forward to seeing how it reacts in training camp and also preseason and into the regular season."

NBA suspends Joshua Primo for four games for exposing himself to women

NEW YORK (AP)—The NBA suspended former San Antonio Spurs guard Joshua Primo on Friday for four games without pay for conduct detrimental to the league.

League investigators said that Primo engaged in inappropriate behavior by exposing himself to women. Primo insists his conduct was not intentional, the league said, and investigators found no evidence that he engaged in any misconduct apart from the brief exposures.

Nonetheless, the NBA said his behavior does not conform to league standards and warrants discipline.

Primo, a 20-year-old Canadian who spent one college season at Alabama, has not played in the NBA since the Spurs terminated his contract last October. The Spurs chose him with the 12th overall pick in the 2021 draft.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI wins Marianas Ladies Cup Challenge 2023 vs Guam

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Women's Golf Association golfers are the winners of the 7th Annual Marianas Ladies Cup Challenge 2023 and pose for a photo at the Coral Ocean Resort Saipan golf course last weekend.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Guam Women's Association golfers pose for a photo during the 7th Annual Marianas Ladies Cup Challenge 2023 at the Coral Ocean Resort Saipan golf course last weekend.

Golfers of the CNMI Women's Golf Association and Guam Women's Association wrapped up the 7th Annual Marianas Ladies Cup Challenge 2023 last weekend at the Coral Ocean Resort Saipan golf course.

Saturday was a two-person best ball format with CNMI taking a 3.5-2.5 lead. The second day on Sunday, was an individual stroke play format, with the CNMI team once again taking the lead with an 8-4 final, for a total of 11.5-6.5 to win the tournament and the perpetual trophy.

Net prize trophies were also given to the Top 3 handicap of the tournament. First place went to CWGA's Sunny Hyun Son with 78; second was GWA's Tessie Blair with 79; and third place was Yuko Togawa from CWGA with 81.

On the first day, it was a nail-biting tie between Guam and the CNMI by the time Team 5 came up at 2.5 each. Then, the CNMI's Team 6 of Flor Jones and Kyunga Park scored a point against Guam's Rose Cunliffe and Rose Tarpley to land the close 3.5-2.5 win against Guam.

For Day 2, it was smooth sailing for the CNMI. The game was tied up, 4-4, until CNMI's ninth golfer came in. From there, all CNMI golfers until the 12th scored a point each for an 8-4 win against Guam.

The 2023 Marianas Cup committee included Togawa as its president, Terry Guerrero as the captain, and Lorraine Babauta as the co-captain.

The rest of the CNMI team included Lydia Tan, Sae Hee Kim, Eunae Chang, Niramai Koebel, Eunae Jang, and Lou Kim.

The committee said, "We would like to extend our utmost appreciation to all the sponsors that have contributed to this event and to our exceptional group of players this year for their great performance…most especially, a big thank you to our Guam team for making it over to Saipan for the competition!"

The sponsors of the tourney were the CNMI Federation of Golf Associations, Marianas Visitors Authority, Tan Holdings, BFJ Corporation/Top Shelf, Northern Marianas College, MarPac, Tasi Tours, Coral Ocean Resort, and Guam Women's Golf Federation.

STAAL

From page 20

The Tsunami swim team played a huge role in my high school years on Saipan where I swam competitively representing the NMI in the Micronesian Games in Palau, Tokyo Jr. Sprint, Japan Open, and FINA World Championships in Italy," said the now 29-year-old.

Staal, who now lives in Santa Barbara, California, said it's just proper that he gives back when he's on island to give inspiration to local swimmers.

"Coach Hiro has dedicated so many years to instructing kids of all ages how to swim, which is a really special and valuable skill. I'm very thankful I was able to swim under coach Hiro's guidance as a coach and friend," he said.

During his session with the Tsunami Saipan swimmers, Staal imparted to Tsunami Saipan members that no matter where they go in life, the skills they are learning at swim practice will always be with them and are invaluable.

"From learning how to swim efficiently through the water, to learning dedication and respect to your coach and teammates, everything is transferable in life, school, community, and work."

Staal also marveled on the persistence of this next batch of CNMI swimmers considering that the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi has been mothballed for years.

"I also told them I was proud of them for their dedication to the sport even with the downfall of the 50-meter pool in Marpi. They are working hard to keep training in alternate pools and even the ocean from time to time. It will be really special for Saipan to have a new 50-meter someday (I was told there are plans to build one near the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium)."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Kai Staal shares his experiences in the pool with Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center swimmers.

Kimura, for his part, thanked the Staals for their kind gesture of visiting Tsunami Saipan and then reminisced how Staal actually began his career at the club.

"'Coach Hiro! I want to be a fast swimmer!" that's how Staal made his introduction at the age of 13 years to Tsunami Saipan, he said.

"He was a kid with very high potential, but more than anything related to swimming, he was a really nice guy. He was wonderful as a person! Although he was a super fighter, he was truly kind to everyone. Always humble and passionate about research. He was loved by everyone, young and old."

Kimura believes it was because of Staal's character that he was able to reach his full potential in swimming.

"No matter how talented you are or how blessed you are with strong body, you will never become a great swimmer if you are not a good person. I hope young swimmers know that," he said.

During the Staals' vacation on Saipan they stayed with Kai's parents—Mark and Patty—and spent a lot of time in the ocean snorkeling and freediving.

"A new experience included joining 500 Sails for a day on the water sailing on the traditional Chamorro Flying Proa canoe. They host free sailing days for the community on Saturdays which I highly recommend. We also visited Rota, where my family lived when I was 3 months to 4 years old. It was very special to go back and see the island I spent the first few years of my life on," said Staal.

After graduating from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo with a degree in mechanical engineering, Staal moved to Santa Barbara and got a job working for a company called Redwire Space.

He currently works as a project engineer helping design, build, and test deployable solar arrays for satellites and primarily the International Space Station. Katie, meanwhile, works as a structural engineer, also in Santa Barbara, helping design residential homes.

Asks if he still scratches his childhood itch from time to time, Staal said he does.

"I still swim for exercise but not competitively. I sometimes compete in ocean swim races in the summer here in Santa Barbara. I love being in the water and always feel so much better after a good swim.

Staal made his international debut in 2008 in the Tokyo Jr. Sprint where he won a bronze and a silver medal in the 50m freestyle and 50m breaststroke, respectively.

The next year, he again represented the CNMI in the 2009 Junior Pan Pacific where he broke CNMI Sports Hall of Famer Jonathan Sakovich's 50m freestyle age group record. Later that year in the FINA World Championship in Rome, Staal broke three more CNMI age group records.

Then in the 2010 Micronesian Games in Palau, Staal bagged seven gold medals enroute to smashing two Micro Games records.

The following year in the 2011 Japan Open in Tokyo, he became the first homegrown swimmer to break the 24-second barrier in the 50m freestyle when he touched the tile in 23.98.

ROBIE

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that the running community here is "great… it's super fun to be a part of and it's great seeing everybody get out the door and put their running shoes on."

All participants of the Fun Run and the concurrent PSS/NMA All Schools Cross Country 2023-2024 third qualifier received commemorative medals in celebration of the organizer, Saipan International School's 30th anniversary.

Dr. Ron Snyder, headmaster of SIS, said that after this successful race, their next event in celebration of their anniversary is the Halloween Carnival when SIS students in grades 6-12 host booths for students and guests from other schools.

In November, they will hold their annual International Thanksgiving, with food available from all community groups.

Snyder added that their biggest event planned is a Wine Tasting Gala in Spring 2024. "We hosted this pre-pandemic and are looking forward to bringing it back," he said.

MARPAC

From page 20

ever, Joeten's own marksman, Ervin Villarin, zoomed faster through the court as time wound down and grabbed at every opportunity that came his way.

He, along with his teammates tried to mount a big comeback in the fourth quarter—which saw the lead shrink more and more as Team Office of the Governor missed a lot of their shots, but Aranda and Igitol made sure the lead widened later on.

In the end, Aranda had a game-high 30 points, followed by Igitol's 24, and Pangelinan's 12. Villarin, for his efforts, came out with 26, with Alex Lauron at 17 points.

TUESDAY

MarPac 77 – J. Castro 24, Santos 17, Riungel 10, Mettao 8, Sablan 5, Scaliem Jr. 4, B. Castro 3, Borja 2, Nunez 2.

CUC 67 – Nekaifes 24, Sablan 15, Dionisio 11, Lopaka 10, Aikens 6, Taisacan 1.

Scoring by quarters: 22-13, 41-39, 69-43, 77-67.

MONDAY

Office of the Governor 88 – Aranda 30, Igitol 24, T. Pangelinan 12, Kwon 9, Taisague 7, K. Pangelinan 6.

Joeten 74 – Villarin 26, Lauron 17, Torres 6, Lilles 6, Quan 6, Ordona 4, Augustin 3, Cruz 3, Bondoc 2, Sambile 1.

Scoring by quarters: 23-14, 50-34, 67-49, 88-74.

Wheeler, Castellanos help Phillies beat Marlins in NL Wild Card Series opener.

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Sports

CNMI wins Marianas Ladies Cup Challenge 2023 vs. Guam.

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Staal inspires next generation in visit

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Former CNMI national swimmer Kai Staal, fourth from left, jumps into the pool for a group photo with Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center swimmers during a visit to the club last month.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Seven-time Micronesian Games gold medalist Kai Staal and his wife, Katie, visited Saipan last month and took time from their vacation to share swimming tips as well as inspire the next generation of CNMI swimmers.

"I visited the Tsunami [Saipan Center Saipan] swim team to see coach Hiro [Kimura], Yuko [Kimura], and all the swimmers because I really value and respect the effort and dedication they put into training and building a community.

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Robie, Allen speed through Gecko 5000 Fun Run

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Nick Robie and Terra Allen tore through the early morning and dewy cross country 5K course to first place in their respective divisions of the Gecko 5000 Fun Run at the Banzai Cliff last Saturday morning.

LEIGH GASES
Nick Robie sprints to the finish line of the Gecko 5000 Fun Run at the Banzai Cliff last Saturday morning.

Robie came in first place in the men's division with a time of 19:27. Second place was Anthony Bergancia at 21:02, and third place went to Steve Yang with a time of 24:11.

In the women's division, Terra Allen was first with her time of 25:37. Second place went to Shawna Brennfleck at 27:11, and third was Savannah Grant who clocked in at 27:58.

For 24-year-old Robie, he said that he was pacing himself from "that outstanding high schooler, [Michael Miller]. I had him in my sights and tried to run him down, but he got away.

The CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife employee said this was his first race since coming to Saipan six months ago and that the race was "so fun to be a part of and it's super well-organized. It was a fun mix of uphill and downhill, and it was a beautiful morning."

A mid-distance runner for Butler University, Robie said

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MarPac, Office of the Governor perfect in R&J caging

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

MarPac and Office of the Governor are so far perfect in the Inaugural R&J Wine and Liquor Inter-Gov't/ Business League 2023.

MarPac is at a league leading 4-0 record after their 77-67 win against CUC on Tuesday, and Office of the Governor is right behind at 3-0 with their win over Joeten, 88-74, on Monday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Jeff Castro and Coby Santos were a pair of sharpshooters that led MarPac from the get-go. They, along with Ricky Riungel took it upon themselves to steer clear of CUC with an electric 22-13 first quarter.

The ball continued buzzing between MarPac's crew as they went on to make more shots than they missed. CUC's John Nekaifes and Christopher Sablan were a two-man wrecking crew as they tried to play the catch-up game with MarPac.

Nekaifes scored 24 just as Castro did, but MarPac's starting five and their bench kept the gap a big one, 69-43, by the end of the third quarter.

CUC tried to make a comeback but came up short as MarPac's Santos finished with 17 markers, Riungel with 10, while Frank Mettao had 8. CUC's Sablan had 15 markers and Fredrick Dionisio contributed 11.

In the Office of the Governor-Joeten game, both teams were evenly matched as they came into the game without a loss.

But, Office of the Governor's starting five overpowered Joeten quickly and enjoyed an early 23-14 lead by the end of the first quarter.

It was a high-percentage game from outside the perimeter as both teams boasted snipers from the 3-point range. Team Office of the Governor had Jack Aranda who led his team with back-to-back 3-pointers throughout the game.

He was paired from within the paint by aggressive and accurate teammates Vince Igitol and Timmy Pangelinan, who assisted with tough drives and off-balanced jump shots.

Joeten was pummeled yet again by the end of the third quarter, 67-49, and their running for an undefeated streak was soon to be snapped. How-

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LEIGH GASES
Office of the Governor's Jack Aranda goes for an off-balanced jump shot as he's fouled by a Joeten defender during their game in the Inaugural R&J Wine and Liquor Inter-Gov't/ Business League 2023 on Monday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.